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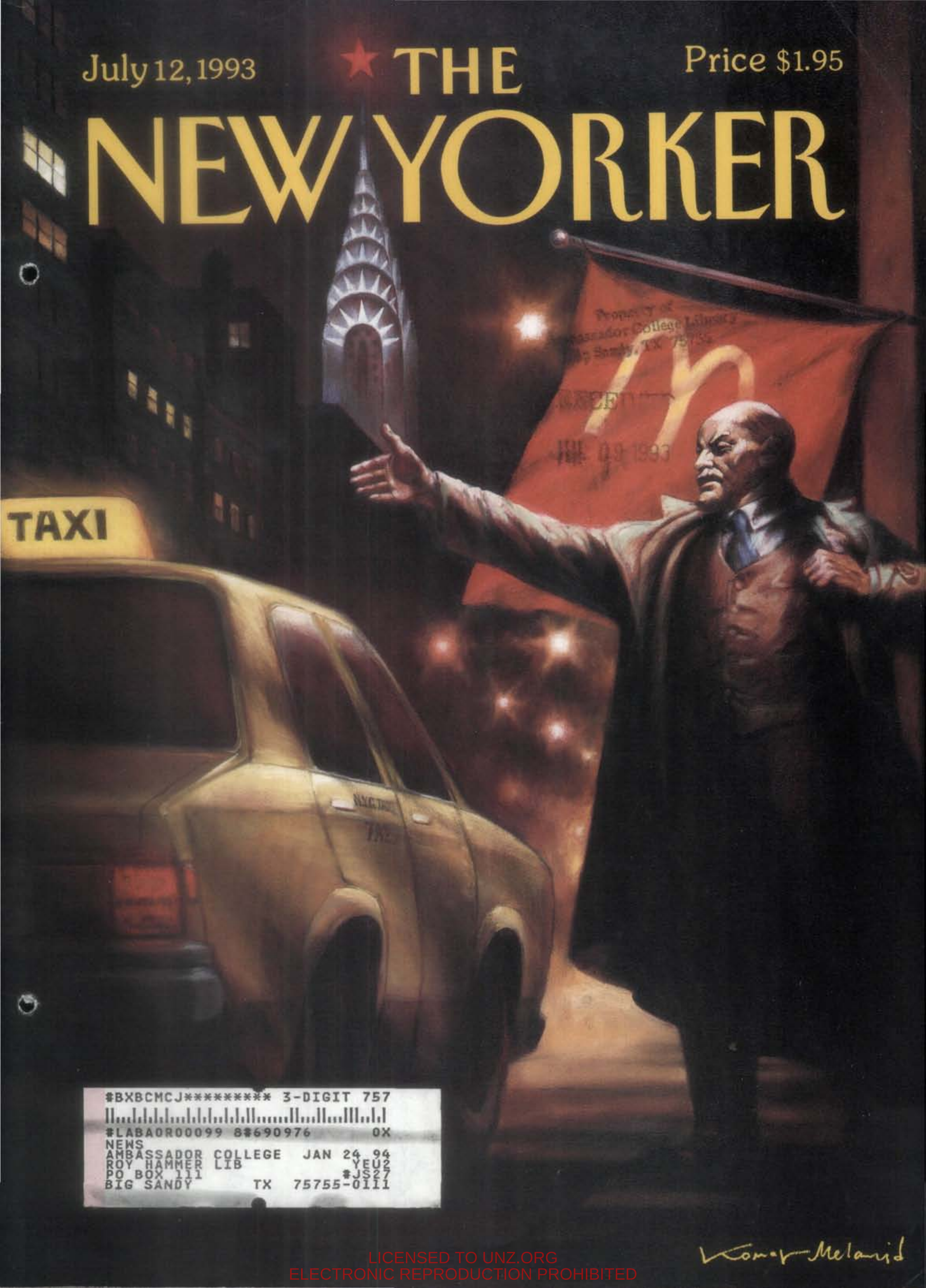

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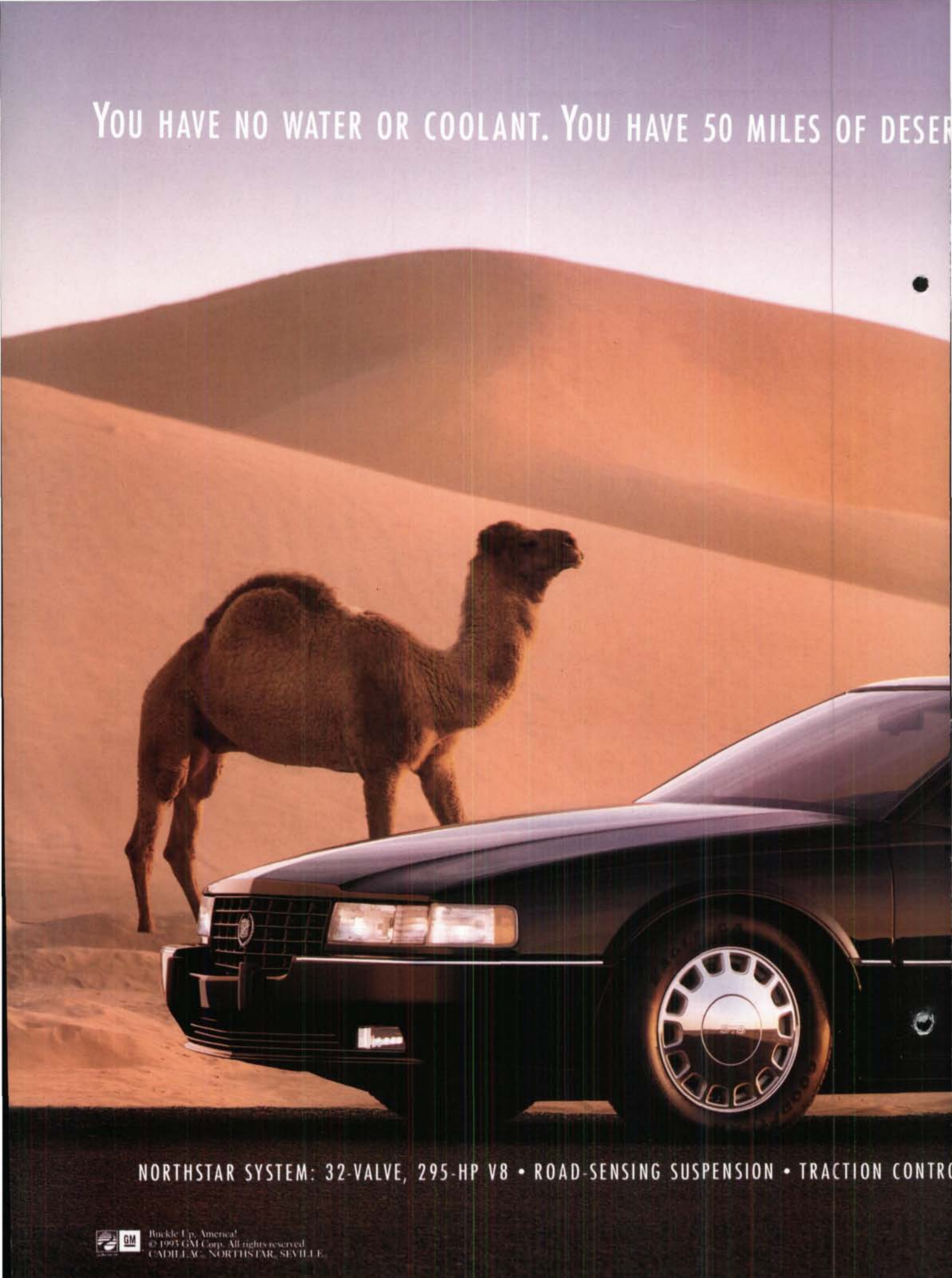
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JULY 12, 1993

COMMENT Empty Suits 4
Just Mollie and me, and the lawyer makes three.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 8

THE TALK OF THE TOWN 25
Dan Quayle immortalized, PEN's new Prez, millennial toilets, etc.

DEPARTMENTS
Letter From Bosnia Unsafe Zone . . . . *Anna Husarska* 29
The Serbs may have the upper hand in the war
in Bosnia, but they're still paranoid and defensive.

PROFILE The Whistle-Blower—Part II . . . . *James Lardner* 39
When the Knapp Commission concluded its inquiry into corruption
in the N.Y.P.D., it might have made sense for David Durk, the cop
who incited the investigation, to just go away. He didn't. Instead, he
continued to fight for change. Photograph by Richard Avedon.

STORYBOARD City Camps . . . . *Roz Chast* 49

ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK Sour Notes . . . . *Ronald Searle* 57

PORTFOLIO Slight Modifications . . . . *Lawrence Weschler* 59
What is to be done with the monuments of the former
Soviet Union? Artists from around the world offer their solutions.

FICTION "Heavy Lifting" . . . . *Ralph Lombreglia* 66

A CRITIC AT LARGE Don Juan in Hull . . . . *Martin Amis* 74
God protect Philip Larkin from his biographers.

ARTIST AT LARGE Urban Gardens . . . . *Arnold Roth* 83

THE CRITICS
Dancing: The Spelling of Agon . . . . *Arlene Croce* 84
The Current Cinema: "In the Line of Fire" . . . . *Terrence Rafferty* 93
The Theatre: "A Perfect Ganesh" . . . . *Edith Oliver* 95
On Television: "Def Comedy Jam," "Laurel Avenue" . . . . *James Wolcott* 96
Books: John Gross's "Shylock" . . . . *Wilfrid Sheed* 99
Briefly Noted 103

POEMS
"The Fish" . . . . *Linda Bierds* 47
"You Come When I Call You" . . . . *Henri Cole* 54
"Dry Ground" . . . . *W.S. Merwin* 68

SHOUTS AND MURMURS Please Refrain from Breathing . . . . *Christopher Buckley* 104

COVER *Lenin Hails a Cab, by Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid*

DRAWINGS *Robert Mankoff, Mischa Richter, Edward Frascino, Ed Fisher, Gahan Wilson, Jack Ziegler, Michael Crawford, Arnie Levin, J. B. Handelsman, William Hamilton, Bernard Schoenbaum, Henry Martin, Frank Modell, Michael Maslin, Edward Koren, Tom Kleh, Richard Cline, George Booth, Danny Shanahan, Dean Vietor, Bruce Eric Kaplan*

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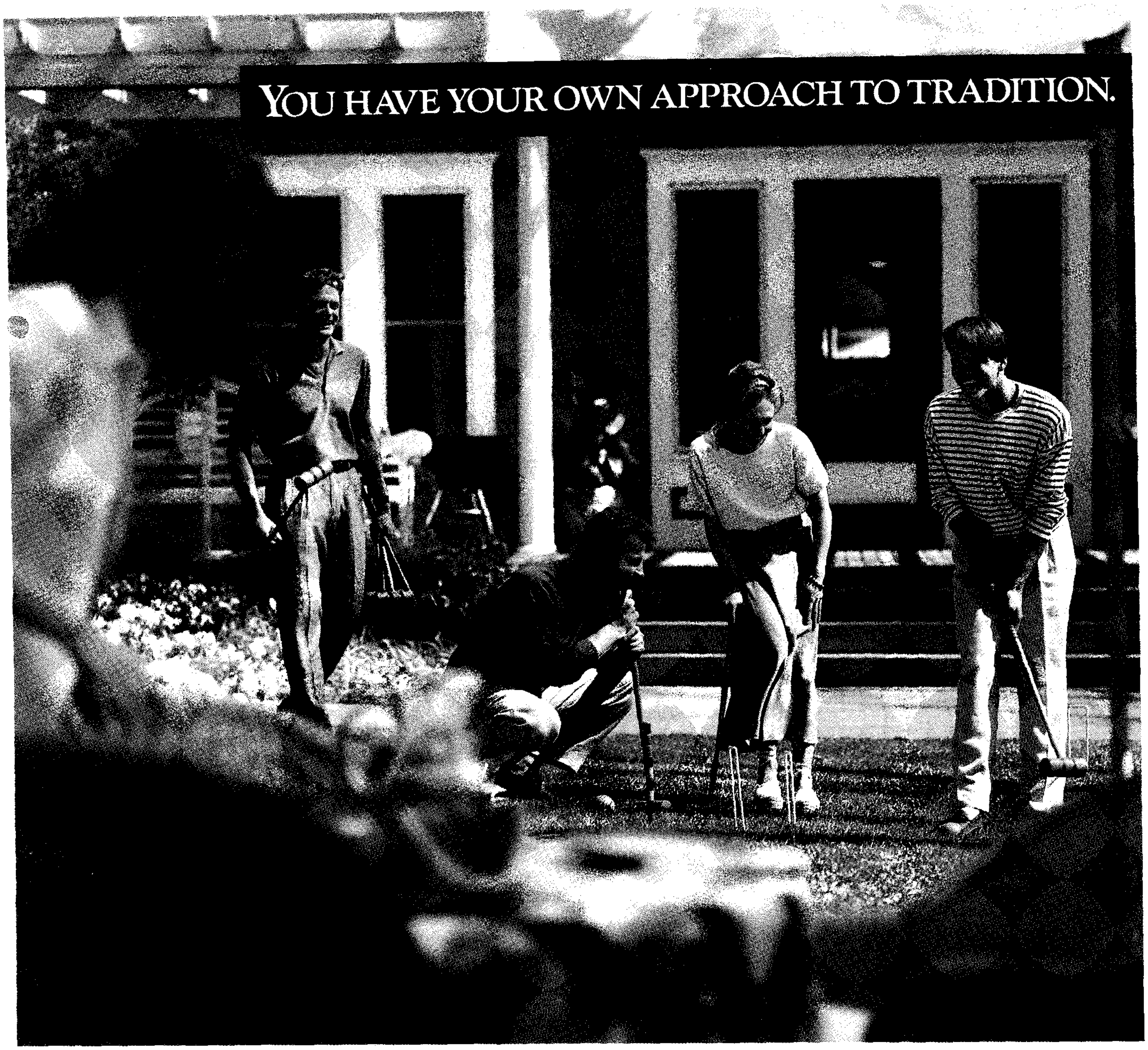
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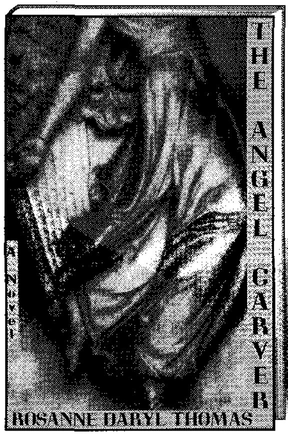

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COMMENT

EMPTY SUITS

JAPANESE executives consider it rude to have lawyers present in meetings with other companies; their American counterparts would be crazy not to. European lawyers find it astonishing that the courts in the United States allow parties to a lawsuit to shop for expert witnesses until they find one whose testimony is guaranteed to support the case they're trying to make. (The magazine *Trial* carries ads for testifyin' experts on such subjects as weather disasters, sports-playing-surface failures, and exploding bottles. The more fully credentialled and crowd-pleasing of these authorities-for-rent reportedly pull down twenty thousand dollars per case.) Until 1977, lawyers couldn't advertise. Now they not only can hawk their services on TV and billboards—"Dial 1-800-J'ACCUSE"—but can rummage through a malpractice plaintiff's medical files, say, and name every doctor in them as a defendant, without making any further effort to affix actual responsibility. Two weeks ago, the Supreme Court approved ten million dollars in punitive damages awarded in a commercial lawsuit in which the claimed damages were only nineteen thousand dollars. This works out to a ratio of five hundred and twenty-six to one.

In an indignant and often sonorous book entitled "The Litigation Explosion," which was published in 1991, Walter K. Olson has collected many such grotesqueries of our civil-court system. He writes that the modern American lawsuit has "squandered immense fortunes, sent the cream of a nation's intellectual talent into dubious battle, reduced valuable enterprises to ruin, made miserable the practice of honorable professions, and brought needless pain to broken families," and concludes, "It has been a spiral of destructive recrimination, with no end in sight." (That state of affairs is all too familiar to this magazine, which, it should be noted in the spirit of full disclosure, has recently been obliged to go to court to clear itself in a libel suit of Jarndycean protraction and complication.)

Of course, one should proceed with caution through a book raved about by Robert Bork and Warren Burger and written by someone whose previous

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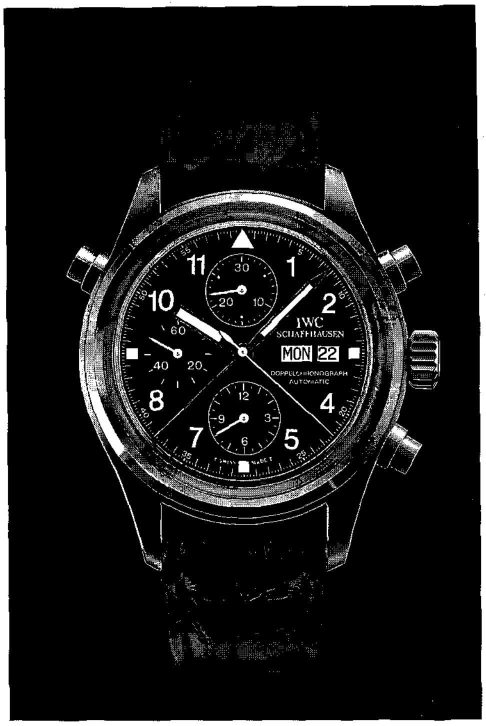

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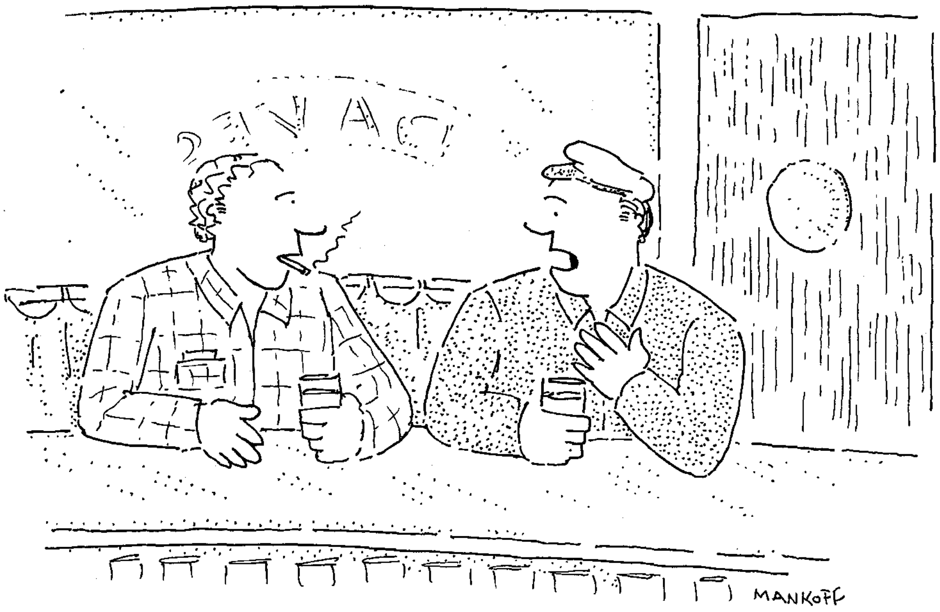


"I don't know about you, but Clinton has certainly bombed his way back into my heart."

• •

body of work consisted mostly of clippings from *Fortune*, *Barron's*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. Mr. Olson seems one-sided about the evils of product-liability suits: his notion of a free market sometimes sounds more like a free-fire zone. And one must acknowledge the good intentions that have hewn some of the paving stones in the road to our present hell of litigation. But it's hard not to share Mr. Olson's general dismay about "a regime of law that sets people against each other in adversarial bitterness at every turn."

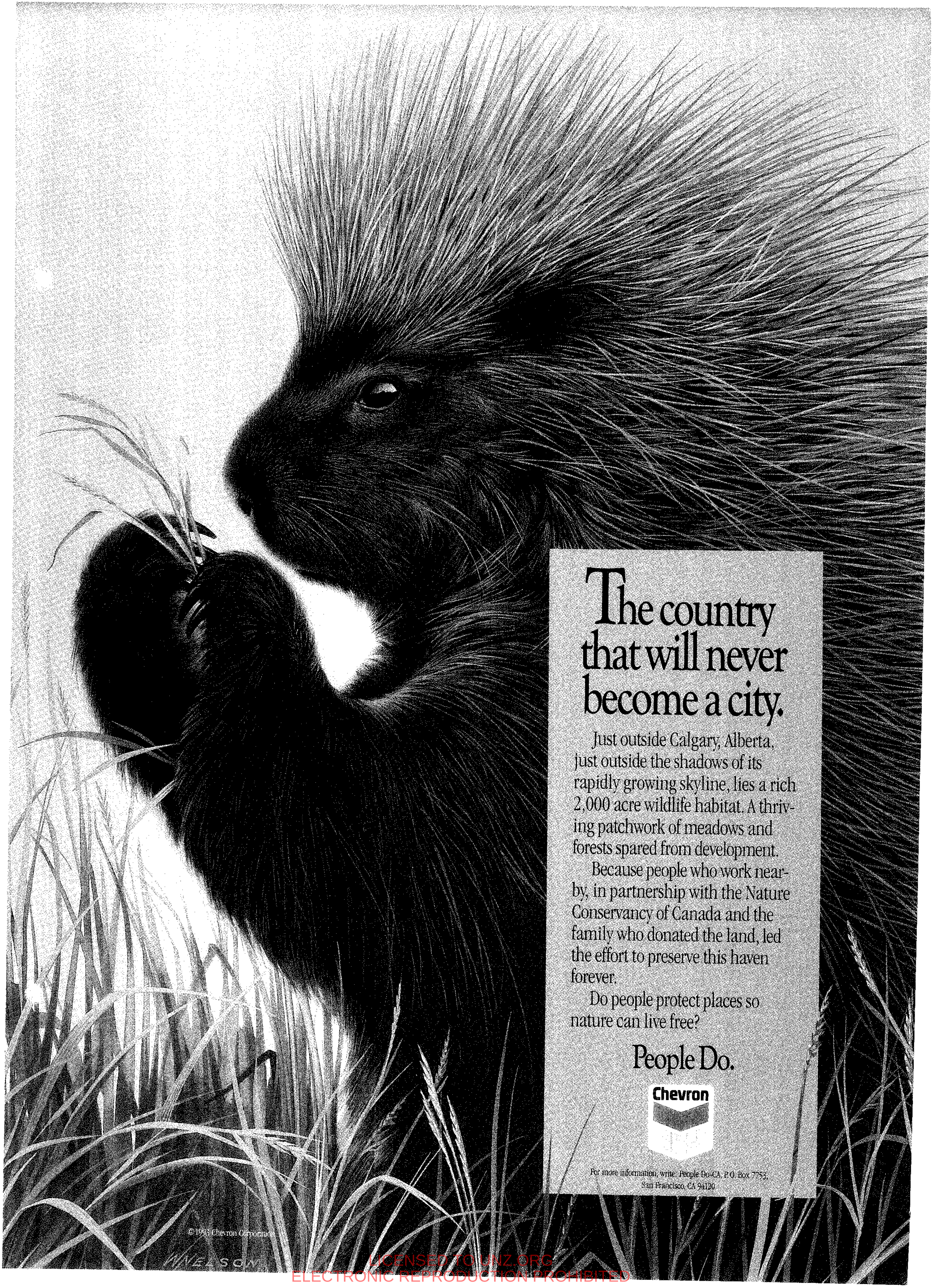
Dismay may yield to frank bogglement in the face of a ninety-eight-page article by a law professor at Northwestern named Jane E. Larson that appeared in the March, 1993, issue of the *Columbia Law Review*. The title of the article (featuring a quotation from Mozart's "Don Giovanni") is " 'Women Understand So Little, They Call My Good Nature "Deceit" ': A Feminist Rethinking of Seduction," and in what follows Professor Larson argues for the creation of a new field of litigation—a modern tort of sexual fraud. She writes, "I propose the following addition to the Restatement (Second) of Torts: One who fraudulently makes a misrepresentation of fact, opinion, intention, or law, for the purpose of inducing another to consent to sexual relations in reliance upon it, is subject to liability to the other in deceit for serious physical, pecuniary, and emotional loss caused to the recipient by his or her justifiable reliance upon the misrepresentation." In other words, if Terry uses fraudulent means to inveigle Pat into bed, and if the ensuing coition results in injury or financial loss—or just emotional distress—for Pat, then Pat should be able to collect actual and punitive damages from Terry.

Professor Larson's central concerns—falsification of marital status, concealment of venereal disease, etc.—are genuine (and well-established) causes for legal involvement. And she tries to demonstrate that her new tort will not unleash a flood of lawsuits based on what she calls "lovers' nonsense." So, admittedly, it's a little unfair to make fun of this earnest, sometimes brilliant document—but what the hell. There's no way around the conclusion that if its language is taken literally judges and juries could someday award big bucks for the distress caused by counter-promissory seismic stasis (he told her the earth would move and it didn't); reckless parental-nonreturn assurances (her parents showed up two hours earlier than she told him they would); breach of natal-site-removal contract (he said he would take her away from this two-bit burg and didn't); and lunar nondelivery (she promised him the moon and never came across).

The seventy-eight pages of close moral, historical, and legal analysis that Professor Larson deploys before making her proposal show that it flows clearly and cleanly from idealism verging on utopianism, and it is this quality that makes it so easy to poke fun at the suggestion. She hopes, she says, touchingly, at the beginning of the article, "to challenge and reshape commonplace and accepted sexual values and practices." One of her primary goals in urging a further expansion of the already distended civil-court dockets is to allow everyone to have, as she puts it, "the power to shape sexual expression in ways that support and advance her personality and life projects."

This sort of litigative altruism receives relatively short shrift in Walter Olson's book. But it probably deserves very long shrift indeed if one is interested in speculating about the original causes and the implications of our current plague of litigiousness. After all, lawyers' greed and crumbling civil-suit boundaries are really only the effects—the end results—of the Erewhonian yearning that underlies Professor Larson's exhortation to construct a system of redress for (among other, more plausibly actionable kinds of harm) certain instances of the most intractable and, so far, most private kind of suffering a human being is heir to: heartache.

The hopes of our era have been fashioned by faith in reason—the Renaissance, eighteenth-century rationalism, nineteenth-century utopianism, twentieth-century reform movements of every kind. Science and technology provide us with instant global communications, miracle medical cures, wave upon wave of new information. In this context, the obdurate quality of malfeasance not only in commerce but also in personal travail—in what Professor Larson evidently sees as the persistent way in which men and women betray each other—becomes particularly frustrating. But, while it's true that reason, as represented by the law, can often redress wrongs and chastise wrongdoers, we won't ever be able to take human nature to court, as we seem to want to, in our increasingly frequent, increasingly righteous, and sometimes increasingly daffy resort to litigation. The ultimate defendants—God, fate, evolution, or simply our innermost selves—are beyond the reach of the process servers. ♦



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THE THEATRE

Rollin' On

THE degree to which "Jelly's Last Jam" faithfully reflects the life and music of its subject, the jazz pioneer Jelly Roll Morton, continues to provoke discussion. What seems less open to debate is the musical's tremendous theatricality. More than a year after the show opened, that showmanship remains intact. "Jelly" has stayed vibrant in part through the vigilance of the director and book writer, George C. Wolfe, who has revisited the musical with unusual frequency, and in part through the alertness of its holdover cast members. Stanley Wayne Mathis, who plays Jelly Roll's confrere Jack the Bear and who can signal more meaning while wiping his brow than most actors can while reciting iambic pentameter, still provides enormous pleasure, as do Mamie Duncan-Gibbs and Allison M. Williams, who are two of the En Vogue-like Hunnies.

The new principals—Ben Vereen as Chimney Man, Brian Mitchell as Jelly, and Phylicia Rashad as Jelly's lover, Anita—are holding up their end, too. As "the concierge to the Roll's soul," Mr. Vereen lurks splendidly on the margins of the jazzman's life story, grinning, prodding, correcting untruths. As the "full-hipped, sweet-lipped" Anita, Ms. Rashad compels the audience's attention, never more so than when she announces her erotic independence. And what can one say about the suave Mr. Mitchell except that, faced with the unenviable task of following Gregory Hines in the title role, he succeeds admirably?

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

ANNIE WARBUCKS—The sequel to "Annie." With Kathryn Zaremba, in the musical's title role, Harve Presnell, and Donna McKechnie. Previews begin July 8. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

MEASURE FOR MEASURE—The thirty-eighth season of free Shakespeare in the Park opens with this production, which the director, Michael Rudman, has set on a Caribbean island. Kevin Kline, André Braugher, Lisa Gay Hamilton, and Blair Underwood head up the cast. In previews. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ANGELS IN AMERICA: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES—The first half of Tony Kushner's epic work is set in 1985, at the height of the Reagan counter-revolution, and it maps the trickle-down effect of self-interest as Kushner's characters ruthlessly pursue their private and public destinies. The Pulitzer Prize-winning play is a saga about sexual politics, death, and decency. Not to be missed. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

BLOOD BROTHERS—A glum non-musical musical, imported from Britain, about twin boys who are separated at birth. The boys later become friends, love the same girl, and die violent deaths. Willy Russell, whose credentials are good, wrote book, music, and lyrics, to no avail. With Con O'Neill, Stephanie Lawrence, Jan Graveson, and Mark Michael Hutchinson. (5/10/93) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

CAMELOT—"Camelot" is made of sturdy stuff, and it's a good thing, too, given this production's direction and set design. Robert Goulet rises far above his surroundings and has created a worthy successor to his Lancelot. As for the rest of the cast, between the wood-nymph ballet and the madrigal ballet and the slo-mo fights anyone would be hard-pressed to be credible. Even so, it's still "Camelot," and Goulet is convincingly Arthurian. Just close your eyes and listen. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

FOOL MOON—Bill Irwin and David Shiner are the inspired clowns in a show that is perfection itself. The only sound you'll hear is the merry music of the Red Clay Ramblers and the abundant laughter of the audience. (3/8/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1993—Once again, a galaxy of parodies that sharpen into satire. This edition is as funny as its predecessors. Among the new shows under consideration are "Guys and Dolls" and "Falsettos," and the holdovers include "Les Misérables" and "The Phantom of the Opera." Gerard Alessandrini, as if you had to be told, is the clever writer and director, and Susanne Blakeslee, Allison Briner, Brad Oscar, and Craig Wells are the performers, doing a large assortment of roles. (1/25/93) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

THE GOODBYE GIRL—Bernadette Peters and Martin Short, two brilliant, funny stars, transform this otherwise indifferent musical adaptation of Neil Simon's movie into a sporadically festive evening. Score by Marvin Hamlisch, lyrics by David Zippel. Michael Kidd directed. (3/15/93) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

JEFFREY—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS; with John Michael Higgins. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally, a star performance by Brent Carver, as the heroic homosexual window dresser, and another by the redoubtable Chita Rivera, in the title role. Under Harold Prince's direction, the action is always lively and often witty and tender. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb, the setting is by Jerome Sirlin, and the costumes are by Florence Klotz. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

LATER LIFE—The reunion, after thirty years, of a middle-aged man and woman who were once in love is at the heart of this play by A. R. Gurney—a reunion that comes to nothing. The scene is a cocktail party in Boston, where the couple are constantly interrupted by the other guests, who arrive two by two. Mr. Gurney has written with his customary wit and perception, and the actors do him proud. Edmond Genest and Maureen Anderman are the man and woman, and Anthony Heald and Carole Shelley are everybody else. (6/14/93) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes here on July 11; moves to the Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St., starting Aug. 9.)

LOOSE KNIT—Theresa Rebeck has written a series of scenes about the heterosexual trials and tribulations of five New York City women who are members of a knitting circle. The scenes are funny, but they are hitched to a meandering, inconsequential plot. As in last year's "Spike Heels," however, Ms. Rebeck says very little very well. The actors are lively and believable (Mary B. Ward and Daniel Gerroll, as a sleazy bachelor plutocrat, stand out), the jokes are perceptive, and the evening is pleasant. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

LOVECHILD—A comedy by Gerard Stembridge about contemporary Irish issues, including the Bishop Casey affair. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

ORESTES—A play by Charles L. Mee, Jr., based on Euripides' version of the final days of the House of Atreus. The site-specific production is presented by En Garde Arts. Jefferson Mays and Theresa McCarthy lead a cast of nineteen. (Penn Yards, one block west of Twelfth Ave. and 59th St. Closes July 18. For reservations, call 274-8123.)

Steve Blanchard, Robert Goulet, and Patricia Kies in "Camelot."

STEPHEN JOHNSON

A Perfect Ganesh—A new play by Terrence McNally, with a cast of four: Zoe Caldwell, Dominic Cuskern, Frances Sternhagen, and Fisher Stevens. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Playboy of the West Indies—Mustapha Matura transplants John Millington Synge's "Playboy" from Ireland to Trinidad. That it survives the move so well is due, in part, to Mr. Matura's poetic fluency in wielding the local patois, and, in part, to the distinguished cast, under the direction of Gerald Gutierrez. With Victor Love. (5/24/93) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes July 25.)

Shakespeare for My Father—A marvellous one-woman show, in which Lynn Redgrave reviews her own life in a search for her unloving father, Michael Redgrave. She combines anecdotes, brilliant thumbnail impersonations of British actors, and wry reminiscence with passages from Shakespeare, which she delivers with eloquence and emotion. This essentially serious evening is often as amusing as it is sad. (5/10/93) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

She Loves Me—This revival of the musical by Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick, a charmer thirty years ago, barely survives a clunky production. Even so, the score and lyrics hold up, as does the book by Joe Masteroff; the company, headed by Boyd Gaines and Judy Kuhn, as a couple of secret pen pals in a Budapest *parfumerie* in 1934, performs well, under difficult circumstances. (6/28/93) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

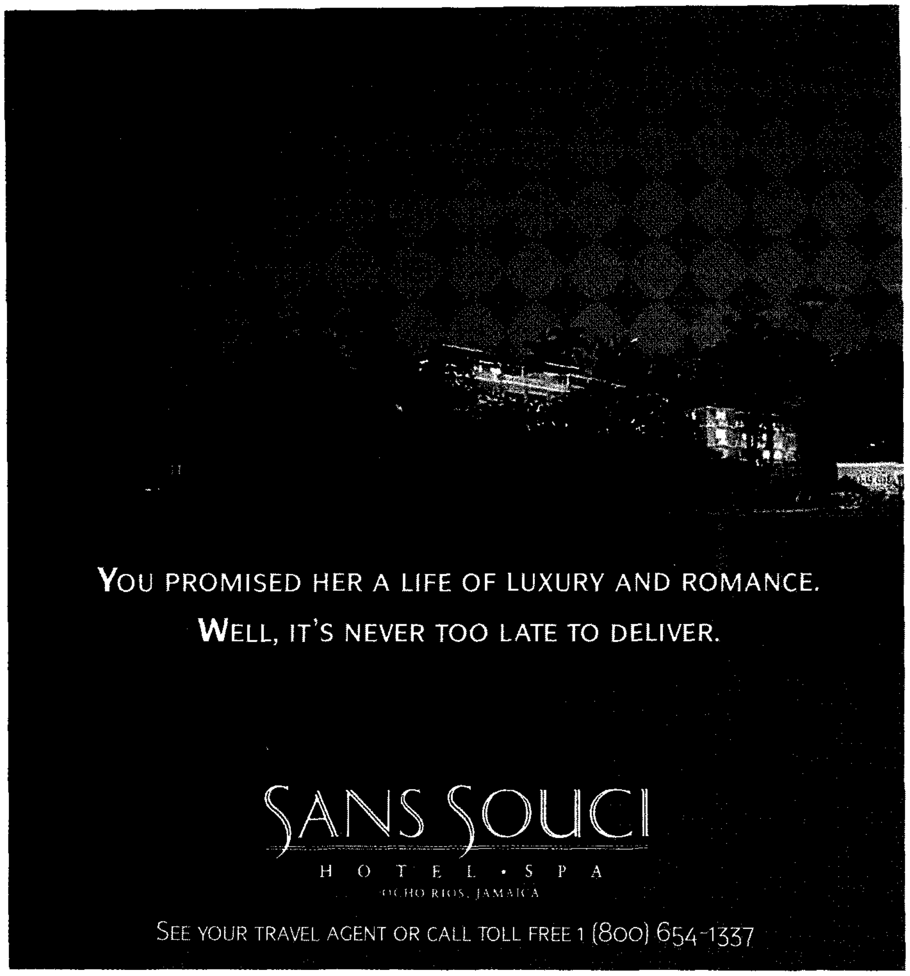
The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's latest play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. They are portrayed by Jane Alexander, Christine Estabrook, and Madeline Kahn. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. (11/2/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Three Hotels—This new play by Jon Robin Baitz is no more than a technical exercise, but what technique! Debra Monk and Ron Rifkin are superb as husband and wife; the versatile Joe Mantello directed. (Circle Repertory Company, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

The Who's Tommy—Pete Townshend's music—however muted for Broadway—has an indubitable thrill, but director Des McAnuff's production is caught on the horns of a theatrical dilemma that no amount of slick, exhausting spectacle can resolve. The hero, that deaf, dumb, and blind kid, is spectacularly passive, and thus unreachable, unknowable, and essentially undramatic. (5/3/93) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 74-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **JELLY'S LAST JAM:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **OLEANNA:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.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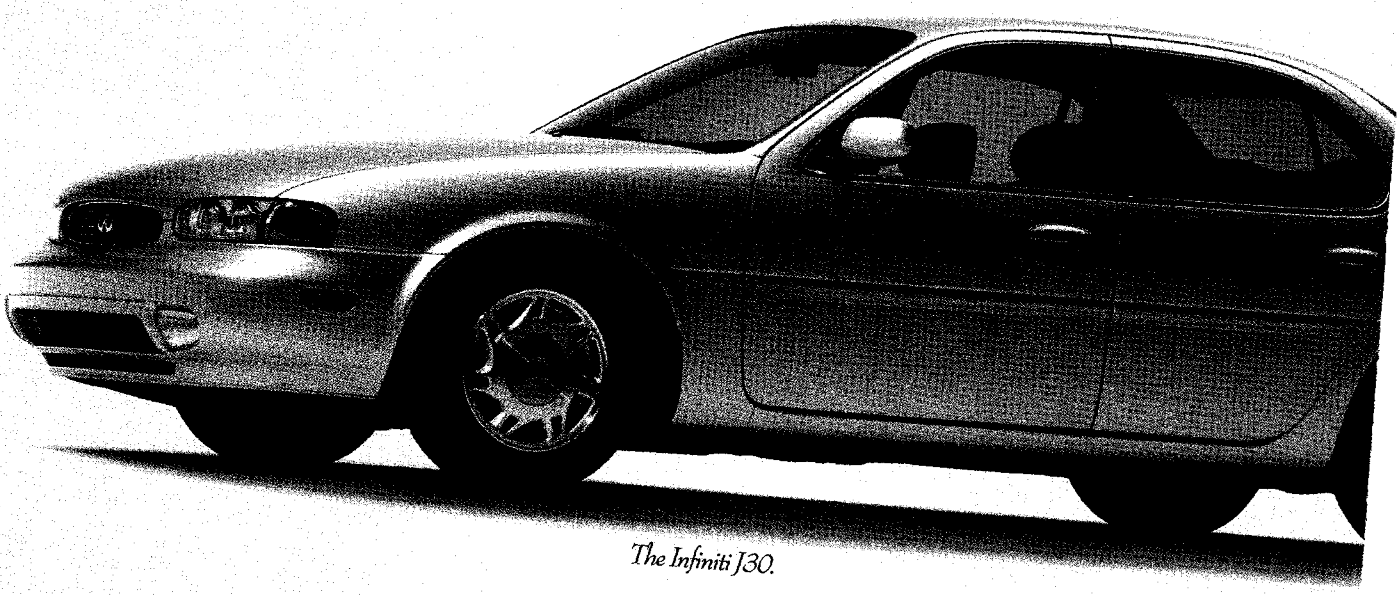
A caterpillar in its cocoon.
A chick in its shell.
We figured Mother Nature was trying
to tell us something.



The Infiniti J30.

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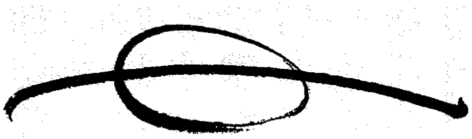

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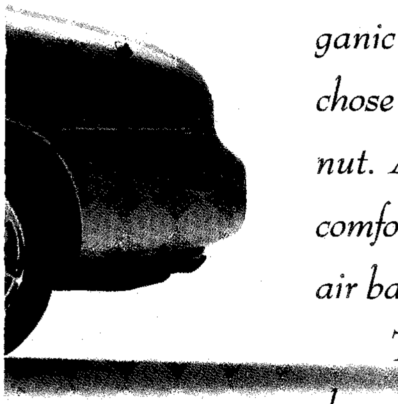

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DANCE

Nik's Voice

ALWIN NIKOLAIS, whom everyone called Nik, didn't look much like a dancer (though he once was), and he spoke a technician's language—pragmatic, direct, unmoistened by metaphors. But dancing was his life. He had fixed ideas and passionate opinions about it; he laid his thoughts on the line in the theatre and in the studio; he cooked up the lighting, the décor, and the music to surround it; and he attracted highly individual performers to share his vision, among them his longtime colleague Murray Louis, one of the most sensitive modern-dance soloists of the past half century. This month at the Joyce, Nikolais and Murray Louis Dance will give a retrospective of Nik's work, drawing on current repertory as well as on reconstructions made for the recent eighteen-month Nikolais retrospective at Rutgers.

A book of essays, from A Cappella Books, is also in the offing. When Nik died earlier this year, at the age of eighty-three, he left a long manuscript, which he had been working on for more than twenty years. The company manager, Paul Fricken, typed up much of it from the original longhand for the editors and scholars who will help shape it. The manuscript includes autobiographical material, such as the story of how Nik stole time to work on his own dance-notation system, which he called Choroscript, while serving as a sergeant during the Second World War. The editors' goal is to keep Nik's voice "as immediate and fresh as it can possibly be," Mr. Fricken said recently. "He let his opinions shine forth in it and he didn't gild the lily. He spoke from his heart about the broad scope of this thing we call dance."

IN TOWN

Pilobolus Dance Theatre—July 7 at 8: "Untitled," "Alraune," "Walklyndon," "Solus," "Slippery Hearts," and "Sweet Purgatory."... ¶ July 8-9 and July 13, all at 8: "The Particle Zoo," "Duet 1992," solo from "The Empty Suitor," "Televisitation," and "Rejoyce: A Pilobolus Finnegans Wake."... ¶ July 10 at 2 and 8, and July 12 at 8: "Bedtime Stories," "Axons," "Clandestiny," "A Portrait," and "Day 2." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through July 17.)

Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company—Performing four works from the repertory. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 9 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

New York City Ballet—July 7 and July 10 at 8:15, and July 8 at 2: "A Midsummer Night's Dream."... ¶ July 8 at 8:15: "Bourrée Fantasque," "Duo Concertante," "Valse-Fantaisie" (1953), and "Symphony in C."... ¶ July 9 at 8:15: "Haieff Divertimento," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "Stravinsky Violin Concerto," and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet."... ¶ July 10 at 2: "Bourrée Fantasque," "Haieff Divertimento," "Valse-Fantaisie" (1967), and "Symphony in C."... ¶ July 13 at 8:15: "Swan Lake," "Ballo della Regina," "Glinka Pas de Trois," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto." (Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Saratoga Springs. 1-518 587-3330.)

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—Merce Cunningham Dance Company, July 7-8 at 8, July 9 at 8:30, and July 10 at 2 and 8:30.... ¶ Susan Marshall & Company, July 9 at 8, July 10 at 5, and July 11 at 7.... ¶ Paul Taylor Dance Company, July 13 at 8. Through July 17. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

L.A. X

BEFORE Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love, before Bruce Springsteen and Patti Scialfa, there was John Doe and Exene Cervenka, of the Los Angeles rock band X. They met and married in the late seventies, and their twining voices—his a hard, unromantic croon, hers a keening siren of anxiety—were the unmistakable signature of X's sound, which became, in a sense, the first real American punk music. (New York bands don't count.)

The marriage ended in 1984, but X carried on for a few more years, until the band grew tired of commercial dead ends and no radio airplay. Doe found a second career as a character actor in Hollywood and released a solo album, and Cervenka also recorded and performed solo; both singers remarried and started families. In the meantime, Nirvana and Lollapalooza transformed the music-industry landscape. Suddenly, tough sounds and profane intensity have found an audience, and X is back on the scene with a sharp new Mercury album, "Hey Zeus!," and even sharper live shows. They'll be at the Academy on July 7, and it should be a grand thrash for old punks and, as a Mercury marketing executive recently put it, for "the younger people who were twelve the last time X had a record out."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town.... ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Academy, 234 W. 43rd St.—A cozy former theatre, situated a few doors away from Times Square, where techno and alternative-rock bands, among others, occasionally turn up. **X** will be here on July 7, with Dillon Fence. For concert information, call 249-8870.

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**KT SULLIVAN,** who is currently at work in the Oak Room, delivers show tunes in a clear, never-faltering soprano voice. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall that features a steady stream of international pop and cabaret stars, as well as the occasional drag queen. The Ballroom is also a tapas restaurant—if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. The ultra-romantic Brazilian singer **EMILIO SANTIAGO** is here through July 10. His breezy, seemingly effortless jazz-pop singing is the next best thing to a whirlwind evening in Rio, and this appearance will win him many local adherents. Beginning July 13, **CHARLES BUSCH.**

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, a gift shop, and, of course, those incredible shrinking aisles that turn a mid-set dash to the rest room into something of a steeplechase. The **STANLEY JORDAN** trio is here through July 11. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A great black loft that's jammed with row after row of tables—it looks a little like the site of a standardized test. Despite the cramped quarters, though, the Bottom Line is a pleasant place to take in a show of folk or rock. On July 12, the club host[illegible] a tribute to Charlie Christian, Django Reinhardt, and other "Kings of Swing." Performers include **DUKE ROBILLARD** and **HERB ELLIS.**

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—The art collection in this neighborhood restaurant, bar, and jazz club is a curator's worst nightmare. Fortunately, the musicians who gather round the Steinway each night are usually more harmonious. **ATTILA ZOLLER** (guitar), **JAMES WILLIAMS** (piano), and **SANTI DEBRIANO** (bass) will be here through July 11. Dining.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—Don't be misled by the sleepy, hole-in-the-wall atmosphere of this bohemian Irish café, or by the fact that the place has no stage and no music schedule. While patrons have been writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over their Rolling Rocks, some pretty fine musicians have turned up and tuned up: Sinéad O'Connor, Marianne Faithfull, and Luka Bloom, to name a heady few.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving: the management has had the good sense not to renovate. In recent years, CB's has become something of an empire; the club is now flanked by a pizzeria/boutique on one side and a bar/performance space on the other—all your shopping needs taken care of in one convenient location. July 8: Bliss. July 9: From Good Homes. July 10: Miracle Legion. July 11: Paw and Mind Over Four.

Eagle Tavern, 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—Where swordfish leap on almost every wall. Where a cat with black and white spots sometimes walks the length of the bar. Where bar birds stare at sports on the tube. And where, between the Sinatra and Streisand tunes that emanate from the jukebox, one can often hear snatches of live folk and Irish music floating in from the back room. On July 9, Patrick Ourceau (fiddle) and John Dillon (guitar and vocal) will perform.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—The seating arrangement in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement makes flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. **DAKOTA STATON** and **DAVID (FATHEAD) NEWMAN** work out through July 11. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A cross between an old-fashioned split-level night cl[illegible] and a parking garage decorated for a senior prom. Despite the balloons and the candy-colored lights, this is a serious room for serious rock-and-rolling. You can either vibrate up front, near a wall-o'-speakers, or lounge around the bar in the back and follow the show on a video monitor. As his name might suggest, **EEK-A-MOUSE** brings a quirky humor to his brand of reggae music, releasing albums with titles like "Eek-a-nomics." The gangly (six feet six) singer sounds a bit like Gregory Isaacs (both have nasal tenor voices), but while Isaacs croons lovey-dovey, Eek-A-Mouse cuts up. He appears July 7, with Mephiskapheles opening. **WAR** is here on July 10. Galliano performs on July 12.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St.—This two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Physically, the place is sagging a bit, but it has an odd, dingy charm. The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. The Andy Zoob orchestra holds forth on July 11. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for freethinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. July 9: the **VELDT,** with Faith and SSL. On July 13, the **KLEZMATICS** will perform.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—This blues bar stands apart from the Upper East Side's usual array of singles bars and has become a big draw for the neighborhood's army of postcollegiates. The neon beer signs, Manny's caps, and funky drinks lend the place a frat-house aura, but don't let that put you off: this long, dark, brick-walled room is a good spot to catch blues artists both major and minor.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The beer of choice here is Rolling Rock—by a landslide—and the crowd may make you feel as if you have a midterm to study for, but many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. On July 8, Crunchlove and Brother Eye share a bill. Saint Johnny, Sugarshock, and Gigantic are in on July 9. On July 10, Wake Ooloo and Popsicle will perform.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes—has more of a country-club feel. Vocalist **SARA ZAHN** is currently appearing, backed by a trio. **WOODY ALLEN'S** New Orleans Funeral and Ragtime Orchestra holds forth on Mondays. Closed Sundays.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. There, you'll find expansive Art Deco glitter; here, intimate nineties glitter. The performers, with their backs to the window, have to compete with a view of the Hudson, the George Washington Bridge, and beyond. A Lerner and Loewe revue runs through the summer here. Maureen Brennan, Eddie Korbich, Juliet Lambert, and Martin Vidnovic are the performers. Closed Mondays.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to Smith Street Society jazz band, Tuesdays to Jim Lawyer and his Bluebird orchestra, Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and Terry Waldo & the Gotham City group, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. On July 7, the Bob Litwak group steps in with guests **WARREN VACHÉ** and **SCOTT HAMILTON.** Sam Ulano and the Bourbon Street Swingers are also on the bill.

RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This decaying theatre, once the home of Studio 54, is now the site of one of the city's biggest, oldest, and loudest rock clubs, which was formerly in the East Village. The club features a broad stage, mobile-home-size speakers, plenty of room to shimmy, and, for the sedentary, a giant Big Brother video screen. July 8: **CLARENCE CLEMONS** and his band. July 10: G.B.H.

John Doe and Exene Cervanka, of X, at the Academy.

GEOFFREY PARKER

RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small red-gold-and-green cabaret. On July 12, actors **B. D. WONG** and **JULIE HALSTON** are paired up in "Beauty and the Butterfly," a show that will include singing and comedy as well as offbeat commentary. Kristine Zbornik and Michael Marotta claim July 13. Dining.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to such things as calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. S.O.B.'s dance floor is always jumping with Rastas and N.Y.U. students, and there's always someone onstage shouting "Put your hands in the air!" July 8: Safy Boutella. July 9: Zulu Spear. July 10: Tom Zé. On July 13, **ASTRUD GILBERTO** begins a three-day run. Closed Sundays. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—This brown-toned ski chalet of a club is a fine place to study jazz-group dynamics. The **STEVE LACY** sextet works out through July 11. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—With the opening of the Chestnut Room, this legendary tourist haven is making a bid to attract serious jazz fans. The club, which resembles a hunting lodge, is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings have been impressive. The **GROVER MITCHELL** big band is here through July 11. Dining.

TIME CAFÉ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Hidden inside this trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez. Upstairs is a sumptuous Moroccan bar and lounge appointed with satin couches, mosaic tables, and Arabian-style fixtures. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

TOMPKINS SQUARE RESTAURANT, 141 Avenue A, at 9th St. (260-4798)—A homey night spot where you can watch the East Village parade pass by and study the latest styles in survival footwear and tattoos. The restaurant is split down the middle to separate those who drink from those who eat *and* drink. The menu is vegetarian-friendly. The atmosphere is a bit old-fashioned. Just now there are some white Christmas lights strung up over the bar, an informal art show on the walls, and jazz outfits on the stage Thursdays through Saturdays. Irish guitarist **PIERCE TURNER** will be here July 9.

TRAMPS, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, located near what was once called Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. The pillared, loftlike room is decorated in a hodgepodge, vaguely Bourbon Street manner, and sight lines are above average. **JOHNNY COPELAND** performs on July 8, with Smokin' Joe Kubek. July 9 belongs to Eddie Shaw & the Wolfgang, with the Hotheads. **CHUCK BROWN & THE SOUL SEARCHERS** are in on July 10.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. The **PHAROAH SANDERS** quartet is in action through July 11. Tenor sax man Sanders is one of Coltrane's spiritual heirs and a pioneer of Afrocentric jazz. He can be both hot and majestic. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

PENNY ARCADE—The performance artist continues in her autobiographical show, "Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!" (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120. Thursdays through Saturdays at 8.)

"BIG ROOM"—P.S. 122's Monday-night series at Irving Plaza, this week with readings by the Nuyorican Poets and an appearance by Sarah Skaggs and her dance company (in "Higher Ground"). (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. July 12 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 477-5288.)

"DISNEY'S SYMPHONIC FANTASY"—The American Symphony Orchestra, eighteen dancers, a thirty-two-member chorus, twenty-six Disney characters, and a narrator. Oh, my. (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. July 7-9 and July 13 at 7; July 10 at 2 and 7; and July 11 at 1 and 6. Through July 18.)

DIXON PLACE—A mecca for performance artists and one of the hosts of the second annual Celebration of Queer Culture. A partial lineup: July 9 at 8 and 10: The theatre company Bad Neighbors presents an installment of their gender-swapping soap opera, "The Opposite Sex." . . . ¶ July 10 at 8: Words, music, and performance from Jeff Burchfield, Lilia Montero-Diaz, Greg Walloch, and Guy Wolf. (258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088.)

ART

Takeover

Like the laboratory of a brilliant mad scientist, the Guggenheim Museum now bubbles and crashes with the intricate work of Rebecca Horn, a German artist who specializes in "mechanomorphic" installations. Horn's work incorporates all manner of objects and materials, from feathers to mechanized knives to a Van de Graaff generator—everything except old-fashioned paint and canvas.

Among the more striking pieces here are "Paradiso," a pair of seven-foot Plexiglas breasts suspended from the sunlit ceiling of the rotunda and dripping milky water into a fountain a hundred feet below, and "The River of the Moon," a series of lead cables that slither up three flights of the spiral ramp, passing through the walls and the floor, and terminate in drill bits boring into the outer wall. It looks as though the entire piece might escape from the museum and work its way down Fifth Avenue. Another work, "Concert for Anarchy," is a mechanized grand piano hung upside down from the ceiling, which suddenly bursts open and deploys its contents like porcupine quills, strikes a marvellous atonal chord, and then slowly retracts, until the cover finally slams shut on the keys. According to the museum, Horn is trying to evoke themes of human vulnerability, emotional fragility, and desire, but this Artspeak doesn't begin to convey the dazzling impact of her show. (Additional work by Horn can be seen at the SoHo Guggenheim and at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice.)

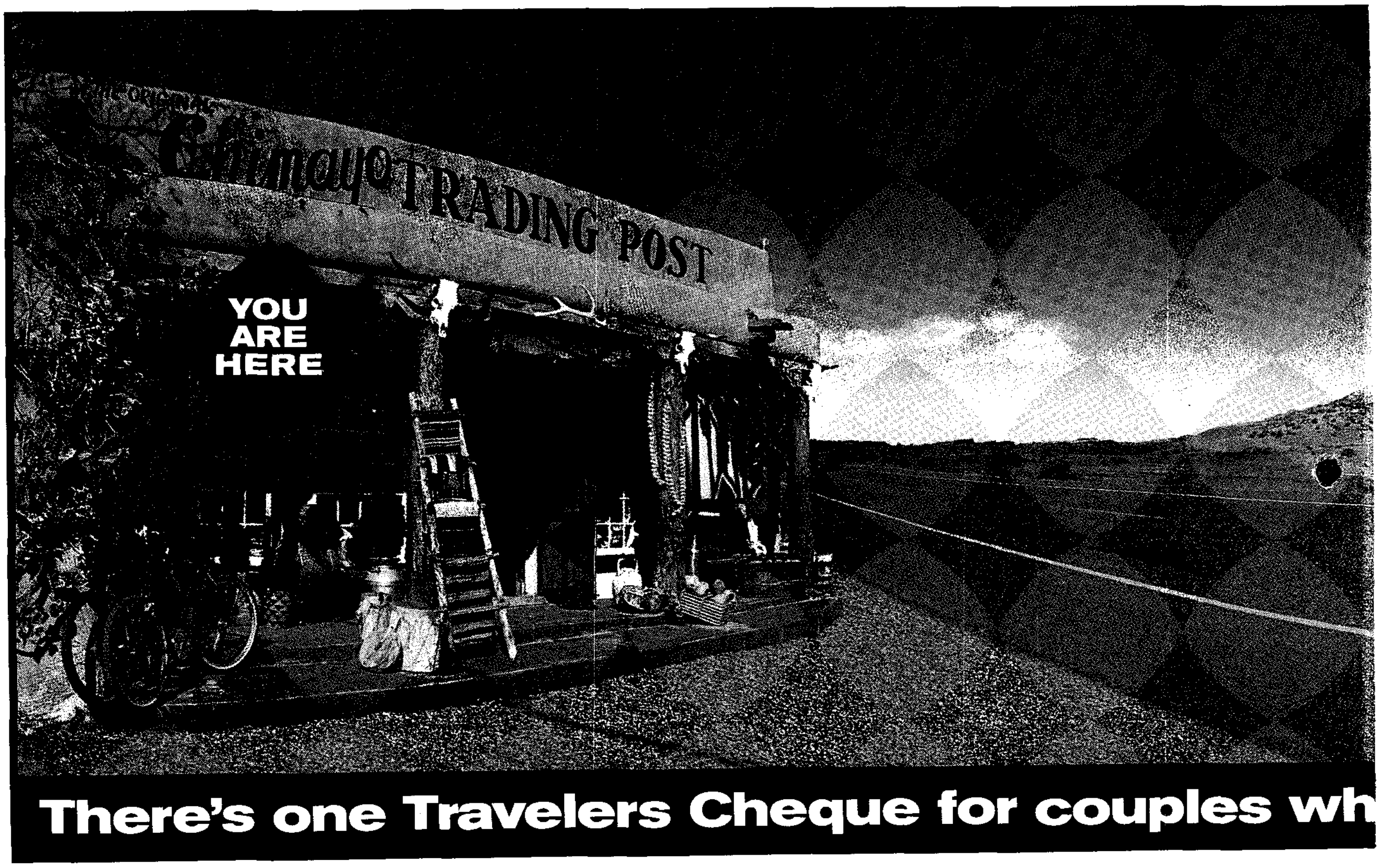
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Forty examples of Persian tiles, from the twelfth century through the late nineteenth, in a snug, one-room exhibit. These intricate cobalt-blue and turquoise decorative pieces reflect both the native Persian genius and styles imported from Afghanistan and China. . . . ¶ "Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper, Selections from the Collection." This show, which presents work from 1938 to 1967, seems almost comically tame in the light of Abstract Expressionism's initial reputation. Among the artists are de Kooning, Motherwell, Pollock, Stamos, Tobey, and many others. . . . ¶ More than a hundred drawings from the J. Paul Getty Museum, with special emphasis on the Italian Renaissance. Included are Leonardo's delicate sketch of a child embracing a lamb (for a painting long since lost) and other works by Bernini, Bronzino, Mantegna, Raphael, and Titian. Through Aug. 8. . . . ¶ The New Costume Institute's first show, "Infra-Apparel," presents three centuries of underwear as outerwear, from the diaphanous frocks of the Directoire period to Jean Paul Gaultier's remarkable costumes for Madonna. Through Aug. 15. . . . ¶ The museum's first display devoted to historic baseball cards. . . . ¶ "A Masterpiece of Sculpture from Renaissance Florence: Verrocchio's Bronze Statues of Christ and St. Thomas." (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.) . . . **NOTE:** The roof garden, featuring six large sculptures, a great view, and, for the first time, cappuccino, is open when weather permits.

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century." In this exhibit of more than three hundred works, one rediscovers several lesser-known artists, most notably Tarsila do Amaral (1886-1973), a lively Cubo-Surrealist painter from Brazil, and Jesús Rafael Soto, the Venezuelan whose brilliant Op constructions, famous during the sixties, seem timely again. The younger generation of Latin Americans, including Julio Galán, Guillermo Kuitca, Jac Leirner, and Ray Smith, is especially strong. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.) . . . **NOTE:** The sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., is open, free, on Fridays and Saturdays from 6 to 10, with musical performances devoted to twentieth-century Latin America.

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Rebecca Horn." . . . ¶ "Modern Masterpieces from the Permanent Collection" features more than a hundred works, from Impressionism to Cubism, including paintings by Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, Mondrian, Miró, and Picasso. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—Sixty works by Paul Klee are on view in this meaty show, which traces the artist's career from grotesques made in his teens to the geometric abstractions made shortly before his death. Klee's childlike sense of wonder seems to blossom as the artist matures. The room devoted to his Bauhaus years is perfection. . . . ¶ "Singular Dimensions in Painting" is a brief history of geometric



and monochromatic postwar painting. Through Aug. 22. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday through Saturday evenings until 10.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"The Subject of Rape," an installation that examines rape in art, history, law, and the media; and "Abject Art: Repulsion and Desire in American Art," which explores the use of degraded materials, impurity, and excess. Through Aug. 29. . . . ¶ "Collection in Context: Hopper in Paris" features more than eighteen works by Edward Hopper, painted during his three sojourns in Paris in the early nineteen-hundreds. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"The Second Dimension: Twentieth-Century Sculptors' Drawings." More than seventy-five works from the museum's permanent collection, including figure drawings by Louise Nevelson and Isamu Noguchi. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Gods, Guardians, and Lovers: Temple Sculptures from North India, A.D. 700-1200" presents the twenty-armed Ganesa, the elephant-headed god of wisdom and good fortune; Vishnu in his boar incarnation; a monkey untying the girdle of a celestial beauty; and other lasciviously smirking guardians and lovers. Through Aug. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—"Artists in the Marketplace" features thirty-five emerging New York artists. . . . ¶ "Another Perspective: Selections from the Permanent Collection." (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Czech Cubism: Architecture and Design." Through July 29. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St.—"From the Inside Out" showcases eight contemporary international artists, including Christian Boltanski (photographic assemblages) and Nancy Spero (heroic women in history), whose work explores the individual experience of Judaism. . . . ¶ Prints, drawings, and other works on paper, by Alice Aycock, Marc Chagall, Max Liebermann, Jules Pascin, and others, in "Collecting for the Twenty-first Century: Recent Acquisitions and Promised Gifts." (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"A Great Legacy: Morgan Collections, 1913-43" presents J. P. Morgan, Jr.,'s acquisitions, including medieval and Renaissance manuscripts; Gutenberg and Caxton incunabula; autograph letters by Austen, Locke, and Balzac; Rembrandt prints; and much more. Through Aug. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

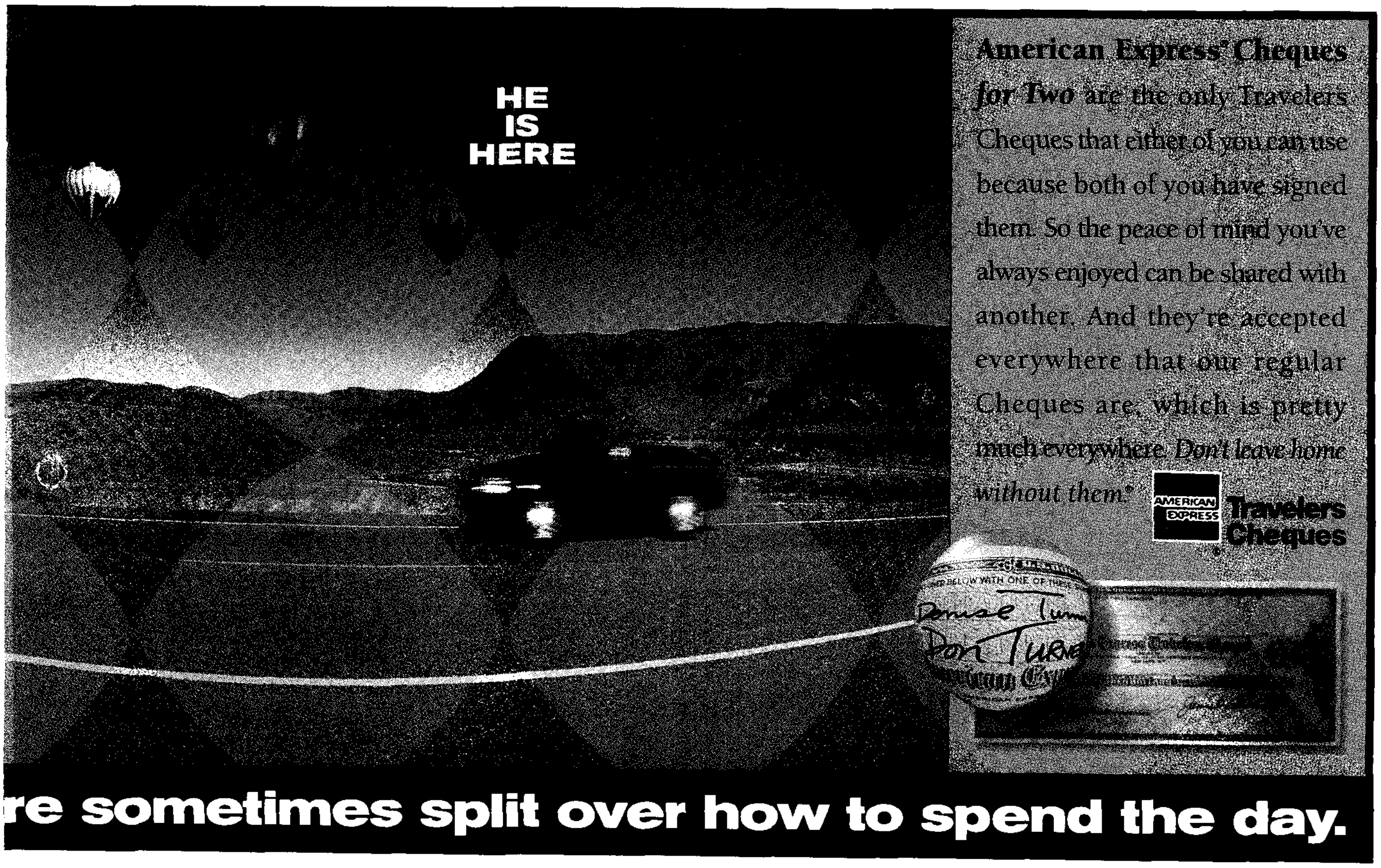
Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Home and the World." This small show focusses on architectural themes in the work of two African artists: Aboudramane, from the Ivory Coast, who lives in Paris, and Bodys Isek Kingelez, from Zaire, who lives in Kinshasa. Aboudramane's works, with titles like "The Reliquary House" and "House of the King's Wife," are made of straw, clay, and horn, and are apparently linked to a fantastical past. Kingelez's, by contrast, are very modern: futuristic high-rises, they borrow from African, Asian, and European architecture, and are meticulously made of painted cardboard. Through Aug. 15. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 11 to 8.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"The Final Frontier" is a group show of painting, sculpture, and electronic media exploring culture and technology. Through Aug. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Flora Photographica: The Flower in Photography from 1835 to the Present." Much more than a collection of pretty blossoms, this exhibition of a hundred and eighty images ranges from Scowen & Company albumen prints from the eighteen-seventies to a great 1953 shot, by Jean Dieuzaide, of Salvador Dali emerging from the water, a pair of petals balanced on the points of his waxed mustache. Through Aug. 21. . . . ¶ "Dandies and Decadence: British Writers at the Turn of the Century." . . . ¶ "Femininity, Fashion, and Feminism" is an exploration of coded messages implicit in apparel. Through Aug. 28. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5:45.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—The library devotes its entire space to "Jazz," featuring more than four hundred original scores and arrangements, rare manuscripts of works by Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus (including a section of Mingus's "Epitaph," until recently thought lost), film footage, photographs from the forties to the sixties, and radio broadcasts from the thirties. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Bears: Imagination and Reality." The only large omnivores that inspire in *Homo sapiens* the simultaneous urge to hug and to flee, bears have fascinated North Americans ever since they (almost) gave up eating us. Black bears and grizzlies are on dramatic display in



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ART—Cont'd

twenty-three new dioramas here; visitors can also admire a forty-claw necklace and watch video interviews with people who have survived close encounters with bears. . . . ¶ "The Hall of Human Biology and Evolution," a new permanent exhibition, includes a hologram of the interior of a woman's body, the world's largest array of pre-human and human fossil casts, a skeleton family watching TV, and a reproduction of an animal frieze from the cave of Lascaux. . . . ¶ "The Dinosaurs of Jurassic Park" features several life-size props created for Steven Spielberg, including a Tyrannosaurus rex, a triceratops, and a velociraptor. . . . ¶ More than fifty color photographs examining "The Pantanal: Brazil's Forgotten Wilderness," a floodplain "the *size* of Wyoming," home to rare and endangered animal and plant species. Through Aug. 29. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Fredrick Einhorn (1956-93)/**Group Show**—A show of the entire output of a young artist who died last May of AIDS—five sculptures, four drawings, and a composite work consisting of a basketful of baseball caps with H.I.V.-positive logos. One of the sculptures is a bronze Barbie doll poised so precariously on its mount that it bobs as you walk past. / The group show features photographic works by Sam Samore; photographs by Jane and Louise Wilson, of domestic settings where violence seems to have occurred; and a series of drawings conceived by Kerri Scharlin, who hired two courtroom sketch artists to depict mundane incidents in her life. Through July 30. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St. Closed Mondays.)

Roxie Munro—Twenty-five detailed watercolors of New York, Paris, and London, some of which have appeared as covers for this magazine. Through July 31. (Images, 580 Broadway. Open Saturdays.)

César Paternosto—This Argentine artist, who has lived in New York since 1967, has worked most of the time in relative obscurity. At the moment, though, his work can be seen both in the Latin-American show at MOMA and in this exhibition of twenty recent abstract paintings and seven new pigmented-concrete sculptures, inspired by the sacred architecture of the Incas. Through July 24. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway.)

Elyn Zimmerman—Monolithic sculptural works that suggest either natural rock formations or futuristic geometric portals. Through Sept. 11. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

"The Museum in the Gallery"—This show of selections from New York University's art collection features twentieth-century American and European art. There are several outstanding works, mostly from the late fifties and early sixties, including a large Kenneth Noland target, a small Rauschenberg collage, a Frankenthaler stain landscape, a classic 1963 Jim Dine, and an effervescent Norman Bluhm abstract titled "Bitter Lemon." The showstopper might very well be a portrait by Sonia von Hausenberg of Woody Allen in a tutu. Through July 23. (Grey Art Gallery, 33 Washington Pl.)

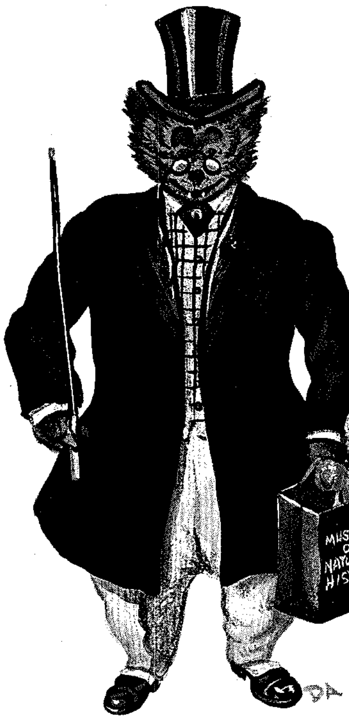
"Vintage Game Boards"—The granddaddy of SoHo galleries from time to time turns nostalgic, as in the current show of nineteenth- and twentieth-century American game boards. The best of them are evocative records of their time. Through July 16. (O. K. Harris, 383 West Broadway.)

Group Show—Works by gay and lesbian artists. In the men's work, the imagery is predominately sexual: Adam Rolston's Rorschach drawings, for example, are explicitly unambiguous depictions of male-male couplings. The women's work, by contrast, is all about sexual violence. Zoe Leonard has contributed photographs of gruesome medieval chastity belts and gynecological instruments, and Leone & Macdonald, who work in tandem, have installed a child's chair with a pointed stick protruding from the seat. Through July 30. (Fawbush, 76 Grand St.)

Short List—**siah armajani:** Protetch, 560 Broadway. Through July 31. . . . **berrisford boothe:** Kelly, 591 Broadway. Through July 31. . . . **frank owen:** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway. Through July 10. . . . **kerri scharlin:** Postmasters, 80 Greene St. Through July 24. . . . **barbara valenta:** O. K. Harris, 383 West Broadway. Through July 17.

UPTOWN

Red Grooms—Sculptural interpretations of some of New York's most famous icons. Visitors can walk into a subway car complete with a spring-mounted floor; sit in the back of an oversized cab and watch large video screens of animated traffic on three sides; and climb to the top of a faux World Trade Center. Through Oct. 11. (Grand Central Terminal. Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 7; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 6.)



"Bears" at the Museum of Natural History.

Charles Krafft—This Seattle-based artist paints disaster scenes—train wrecks, the bombing of Dresden—on blue-and-white delftware purchased at flea markets and garage sales. Through July 30. (Clark, 24 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**john adams/paul weingarten:** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Through July 30. . . . **eduardo oliveira cezar:** Littlejohn-Sternau, 41 E. 57th St. Through July 10. . . . **david driskell:** Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through July 16. . . . **walter hatke/keith jacobshagen:** Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through July 30. . . . **young-hoon ko:** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. Through July 10.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Hot Fun

The summer show at the James Danziger gallery (415 West Broadway; through July 16) could make even a diehard New Yorker rent a car and head for the hills to stick her feet in a brook. Although not all these photographs, which date from the eighteen-forties to today, are necessarily summer shots, a lot are, and there's a palpable physicality to much of the imagery. The exhibition is titled "The Body in Nature," and some of what's here is so joyful it makes you feel that tingle of air and sense of lightness that summer is supposed to be about. A photograph by O. Winston Link from 1956 of a crowd of kids having a ball in a river at night, splashing each other as a train passes on a bridge above them, is so alive that you can almost hear the people laughing, the water slapping, the train chugging. But nothing is as exuberant as a self-portrait by Jacques-Henri Lartigue in which you see him in mid-leap—he doesn't seem to know the pull of gravity. And he's not alone: two dogs join him in his jump, and together the three of them make an idyllic tableau of freedom.

Ansel Adams—In addition to his classic vistas, this exhibit also includes work that serves as a reminder of Adams' ability to take great portraits and casual shots, and even pull off modernist abstraction. One of the portraits, taken in 1937, is of an impishly smiling Georgia O'Keeffe standing next to her friend Orville Cox, at Canyon de Chelly, in Arizona. We're used to seeing O'Keeffe posed, serious, and seemingly aware of her immortality; Adams' portrayal of her is a relief and a surprise. Through July 29. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

Herman Oliver Albrecht (1876-1944)—Photographs taken in turn-of-the-century San Francisco. Albrecht's street photography is often memorable, especially his series depicting a funeral procession in Chinatown. Through July 16. (York, 21 E. 65th St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Outside the Dream: Child Poverty in America." Seventy black-and-white works by photojournalist Stephen Shames. . . . ¶ Collaborative Polaroids by artists and teen-agers from New York City shelters, drug treatment programs, and housing projects. The artists include Chuck Close, Andres Serrano, and William Wegman. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave., at 43rd St.—"Commodity Image": eighty works exploring contemporary photography's role in commerce and desire. Through July 18. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 [illegible] 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**a. roy greer:** O. K. Harris, 383 West Broadway. Through July 17. . . . **daido moriyama:** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through Aug. 13. . . . **tomio seike:** Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. Through July 30. . . . **minayoshi takada:** Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Through Sept. 10. . . . **sabine weiss** and **bruce cratsley:** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Through July 30.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Natural History, the Jewish Museum, the New York Public Library, and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.)

DOUG ALLEN

MUSIC

A Measure of Mendelssohn

It's not in the nature of the Mostly Mozart Festival to be innovative, but rather to embellish pleasant variations on a familiar theme. Everything is in the taste and freshness of the embellishments. This year's filigree invokes each week a different composer with a connection to Mozart. The first week, we have Mendelssohn, whose music is still underappreciated in rough proportion to its overappreciation a century ago. The piano concertos in particular ought to be played more often, and André Watts has long been a fluent advocate of them, so the opening program (July 6-7) promises to please. The "Italian" Symphony is on that bill, too; the Octet in E-Flat comes the following evening, and the Violin Concerto is on the Friday-Saturday orchestral program. Much less familiar is the closing item of the program for July 9-10: Mendelssohn's Second Symphony, an early successor to Beethoven's Ninth in its introduction of chorus and soloists into the symphonic form. But perhaps the most valuable hidden gems of Mendelssohn are his perfectly proportioned, effortlessly fluent songs for voice and piano, and one of the best known of these—"Auf Flügeln des Gesanges"—will turn up in the pre-concert recital on July 10, sung by Christine Brewer, in her New York recital début.

IN TOWN—OPERA

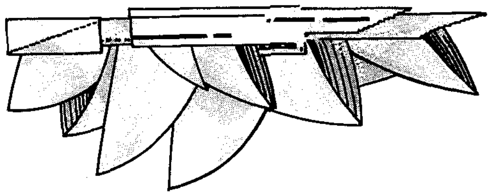
New York Grand Opera—Vincent La Selva leads a staged production of "La Bohème." (Rumsey Playfield, Central Park, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 7 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

IN TOWN—ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Samuel Wong conducts Mozart's G-Major Serenade ("Eine Kleine Nachtmusik," K. 525), Rossini's "William Tell" Overture, and Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" (in Ravel's familiar orchestration), with fireworks following. (Prospect Park, Brooklyn. July 8 at 8.... ¶ Cunningham Park, Queens. July 9 at 8. No tickets necessary for either concert. For rain-date information, call 875-5709.)

Mostly Mozart Festival—July 7: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Festival Orchestra in Mozart's Symphony No. 24, Violin Concerto No. 3 (featuring Joshua Bell), and several arias (with soprano June Anderson), as well as Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with André Watts) and Symphony No. 4 (the "Italian").... ¶ July 8: The Mendelssohn String Quartet performs Mozart's D-Major String Quartet (K. 499); Rudolf Firkušný and other chamber-music luminaries perform Mozart's G-Minor Piano Quartet; and string players of note join for Mendelssohn's Octet.... ¶ July 9-10: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Festival Orchestra and Chorus in Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 2 (the "Lobgesang," featuring sopranos Deborah Voigt and Christine Brewer and tenor Melvyn Poll); Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto (with Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg) and Mozart's "Zauberflöte" Overture round out the program.... ¶ July 12: The Canadian Brass, plus friends, include in their program an arrangement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony for fifteen brass instruments (for those who

QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 AUSTRALIA AND THE FAR EAST



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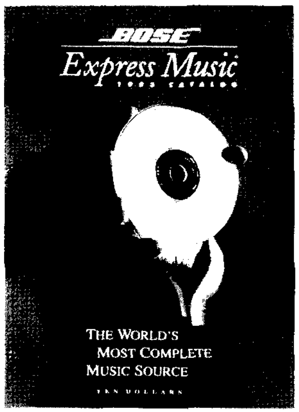

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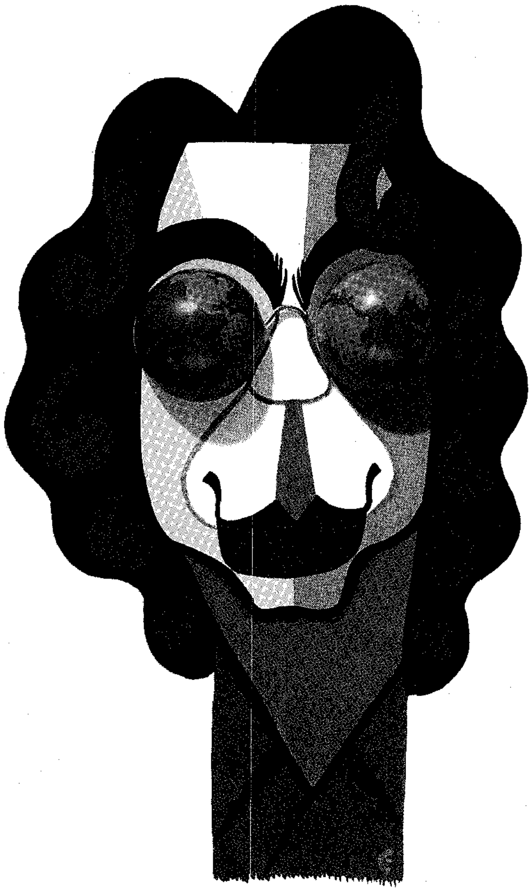


Karl Wallinger of World Party.

DAVID COWLES

truly care).... ¶ July 13-14: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Festival Orchestra in Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro" Overture, Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Dmitry Sitkovetsky), and C-Minor Piano Concerto (with Alexis Weissenberg), as well as Strauss's Divertimento for Small Orchestra. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Evenings at 8.)

Les Colibris—A choir of boys and young men, from Liège, Belgium, directed by Marcel Warny, performing works by Jannequin, Bach, Grétry, and others. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. July 11 at 3. Admission by contribution.)

IN TOWN—RECITALS

Auryn String Quartet—A German ensemble, performing quartets by Haydn (in D Major, Op. 71, No. 2), Britten (his Third), and Schubert (in G Major, D. 887). (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. July 7 at 5:45.)

Douglas Drake—Organist, performing an all-Bach recital. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. July 7 at 8. Admission by contribution. Organ by von Beckerath.)

Bargemusic—Presenting an all-Schumann program: his "Arabesque" (Op. 18, performed by pianist Joseph Villa), A-Minor Violin Sonata (with violinist Rolfe Schulte joining Mr. Villa), and G-Minor Trio (in which cellist Rafael Figueroa completes the ensemble). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. July 8 at 7:30 and July 11 at 4.)

Summergarden—The Museum of Modern Art's estival festival, which this year focusses on Latin America, continues with a concert of twentieth-century works in which percussion plays a prominent role, including music by Jorge Liderman (from Argentina), Ricardo Lorenz (Venezuela), Eduardo Guimarães Alvares (Brazil), Javier Alvarez (Mexico), Rodolfo Coelho de Souza (Brazil), and Alejandro Iglesias Rossi (Argentina). (Sculpture Garden, 14 W. 54th St. July 9-10 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Au-Williams Gamba Duo—A new Sunday-morning concert series has sprung up within city limits but a universe away from the bustle of Manhattan, on City Island. In this installment, viola da gamba players Beverly Au and Webster Williams perform duos by the Sieur de Sainte-Colombe and Marin Marais—well known to those who appreciated the French film "Tous les Matins du Monde"—and some arrangements from the operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. July 11 at 11:30 A.M. No tickets necessary, but you might reserve yourself a seat by calling 222-5762.)

Mesmerizing Mendelssohn Tunes—Both of Mendelssohn's irresistible piano trios, in a salon setting. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. July 11 at 6. No tickets necessary.... **NOTE:** Weekday denizens of the hotel's music salon may sip tea and bask in the civility of a recital by harpist Park Stickney, who plucks and pedals here Mondays through Fridays at 5.)

Washington Square Music Festival—Henry Schuman conducts the Festival Orchestra in Christian Sinding's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Ole Böhn), Beethoven's Symphony No. 6, and several works by Grieg (including songs performed by soprano Barbara Martin). (Washington Square Park. July 13 at 8. No tickets necessary. In case of rain, the concert will be held at Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St.)

OUT OF TOWN

Caramoor Music Festival—July 8 at 4:15: The St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble will perform Beethoven's 1795 String Quintet (Op. 4, the composer's own recomposition of the earlier Wind Octet that was published years later as Op. 103), Copland's Sextet (for clarinet, piano, and strings), and several songs by Beethoven; featuring soprano Camellia Johnson and pianist Ursula Oppens.... ¶ July 9 at 8:30: Pianist Vladimir Feltsman joins the Orchestra of St. Luke's to perform four of Bach's Keyboard Concertos—the thought of which may alarm listeners who have heard the pianist's recent recording of the "Goldberg Variations."... ¶ July 10 at 8:30: Roger Norrington conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's in Beethoven's "Leonora" Overture No. 3, Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1 (featuring Joshua Bell), and Brahms' Symphony No. 2.... ¶ July 11 at 5:30: Alicia de Larrocha and André Previn team up for Mozart's D-Major Sonata for Two Pianos (K. 448), in a concert that also includes Mozart's G-Minor String Quartet (K. 516) and Beethoven's C-Minor Piano Trio (Op. 1, No. 3). (Katonah, N.Y. 1-914 232-1252.)

Opera Festival of New Jersey—July 8 at 8: "The Magic Flute," sung in English.... ¶ July 9 at 8 and July 11 at 3: "The Lighthouse," an operatic mystery by Peter Maxwell Davies.... ¶ July 10 at 8: "Carmen," sung in English. (Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, N.J. For information about tickets, call 1-609 936-1500.)

Rutgers SummerFest—July 8: SummerFest's annual keyboard extravaganza, which this year filters the music of Bach through the intermediaries of harpsichord, organ, fortepiano, modern piano, and synthesizer.... ¶ July 9: Chamber music by J. S. Bach and his four musical sons.... ¶ July 10: Robert Kapilow conducts the Rutgers Festival Orchestra and several soloists in concerti grossi by Bach, Corelli, Vivaldi, and Handel.... ¶ July 11: The Harlem Spiritual Ensemble.... ¶ July 12: The Essex String Quartet performs the première of Deborah Drattel's "Appassionata," in addition to Mozart's "Dissonance" Quartet (K. 465) and Beethoven's F-Major Quartet (Op. 18, No. 1). (Nicholas Music Center, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. For information about tickets, call 1-908 932-7511. Evenings at 8.)

Tanglewood—July 8 at 8:30: Pianist Garrick Ohlsson performs an all-Chopin recital, including the Second Scherzo, Second Sonata, and First Ballade.... ¶ July 9 at 8:30: Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony in Rossini's "Il Signor Bruschino" Overture, several pieces sung by soprano Kathleen Battle, and Mahler's Symphony No. 1.... ¶ July 10 at 8:30: Neeme Järvi conducts the Boston Symphony in Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 and selections from his incidental music for "The Snow Maiden," and in Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Garrick Ohlsson).... ¶ July 11 at 2:30: Roger Norrington conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's in Nicholas Maw's "Spring Music," Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1 (featuring Joshua Bell), and Brahms' Symphony No. 2. (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1940.)

Aston Magna Festival—The period-instrument festival, now in its twenty-first season, opens with Bach's "The Art of Fugue." (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson. July 9 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-914 758-7425.... ¶ St. James Church, Great Barrington, Mass. July 10 at 6. For information about tickets, call 1-413 528-3595.)

Norfolk Chamber Music Festival—July 9 at 8:30: Schubert's "Trout" Quintet, plus Rossini's Duetto for Cello and Double Bass, Beethoven's concert scena "Ah, Perfido!" and John Harbison's "Twilight Music."... ¶ July 10 at 8:30: Members of the New York Woodwind Quintet, plus colleagues, offer a trio sonata by Quantz, Ronald Roseman's Double Quintet for Woodwinds and Brass, and a transcription of Fauré's C-Minor Piano Quartet. (Route 44, Norfolk, Conn. For information about tickets, call 1-203 542-3000.)

Glimmerglass Opera—"Così fan Tutte." (July 10 at 8 and July 12 at 2.)... ¶ Rossini's "Le Comte Ory." (July 11 at 2.) (Cooperstown, N.Y. For information about tickets, call 1-607 547-2255. English supertitles at all performances.)

Maverick Concerts—Chamber music by Beethoven, Villa-Lobos, Miriam Gideon, and Amy Beach, performed by violinist Charles Libove, cellist Roberta Cooper, and pianist Nina Lugovoy. (Woodstock, N.Y. July 11 at 3. For information about tickets, call 1-914 679-8217.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

10,000 Maniacs/World Party—What you think of 10,000 Maniacs depends on your opinion of one Natalie Merchant, songwriter, singer, and whimsical enchantress—or, as some might say, cloying mewler of precious dreck. World Party is a much easier call. The Welsh studio wizard Karl Wallinger has just released his third World Party album—it's called "Bang!" and it's wonderful—and for the first time he has put together a real band, so this show may not have the slightly offhand quality of earlier appearances. (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. July 8 at 8... ¶ Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 12 at [illegible] For tickets, call 307-7171.)

Throat Singers of Tuva—Philatelists venerate the land of Tuva (or Tannu Tuva, as it was formerly known) for its exotic postage stamps, which once depicted archers, reindeer hunters, and other scenes of nomadic life along the Mongolian border. Tuva's music is out of the ordinary, too. Practitioners of its native *höömei* ("throat singing") produce simultaneously a guttural tenor melody and a high-pitched, flutelike descant. Five Tuvans will share their artistry in this performance, the likes of which is not expected to pass this way again any time soon. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. July 8 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

The Chronic Tour—Hard-core rap at its most profane and powerful, featuring Dr. Dre, Run D.M.C., and others. The Geto Boys, led by the one-eyed dwarf Bushwick Bill, specialize in lurid tales of street violence. Their new album, "Till Death Do Us Part," is a cross between Fellini and Iceberg Slim. The bad and bald quartet Onyx perpetrates deliriously and deliberately over-the-top verbal mayhem. A female performer who calls herself Boss is equally tough; on "Born Gangstaz," her new album, she comes across like an armed and dangerous Camille Paglia. The nominal headliner, Dr. Dre, is formerly an N.W.A. member. His album "The Chronic," a collaboration with his protégé Snoop Dogg, has become a huge hit, and features languid grooves celebrating a life of fine ladies, cannabis, and chillin' with da fellas. All of which is fine and dandy, but, live, our money's on Run D.M.C. Always exciting onstage, these three pros know how to work an audience into a frenzy. Born again and backed by their strongest release in years, "Down With the King," these old-school rappers will rock the joint. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. July 10-11 at 7.)

Pete Townshend—The "Tommy"-rocker recently told an interviewer that for aging rock stars like himself (he's forty-eight) "the important thing is to try to avoid the mantle of dignity." His new album, "PsychoDerelict," will help him meet this criterion perhaps too well. The twisted plot of this "radio musical" concerns an aging rock star and his love-hate obsession with a gossip-mongering critic who, it turns out, secretly harbors ambitions of being a performer herself. (Did we mention that she has two sets of nipples?) Pete is likely to perform this thing in its entirety, so be forewarned: it is not—repeat, not—a comedy. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. July 12-13 at 8.)

Spin Doctors—With Soul Asylum and Screaming Trees. (Jones Beach Theatre. July 9 at 7:30.)

Ohio Players—With Papa's Culture. (Central Park SummerStage. July 10 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Clint Black and Wynonna Judd—He's got the big hat, she's got the big hair, and between them they've pretty much got contemporary country music surrounded. Black's new album, "No Time to Kill," urgently juxtaposes old-time country sounds and New Age country consciousness; his love songs concentrate as much on respect and understanding as they do on passion and desire. As for Wynonna, suffice it to say that with her second album, "Tell Me Why," looking to outsell her wildly successful solo début, mom Naomi need never fret over having cut those apron strings. (Jones Beach Theatre. July 10 at 8.)

Virunga—With Samite of Uganda. (Central Park SummerStage. July 11 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Tina Turner—With Lindsay Buckingham. (Radio City Music Hall. July 12-13 at 8. Through July 17.)

ROBERT MELEE

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Away until July 15, when they'll face the Oakland A's.

Mets—Vs. the San Diego Padres, July 7 at 1:40 . . . . ¶ Vs. the Los Angeles Dodgers, July 8-9 at 7:40, July 10 at 3, and July 11 at 8:05. *(The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000, and the Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499.)*

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Off with Their Heads—The fourth annual Bastille Sun-Day in the Meat Market, a street fair commemorating the 1789 fall of the Bastille, will feature a Julia Child look-alike contest, a guillotine for aristocrats, cancan and ballroom dancing, and performances by Chantal Roche and the Butcher Queens. (Gansevoort St., between Hudson and Washington Sts. July 11, from noon to 10. No tickets necessary.)

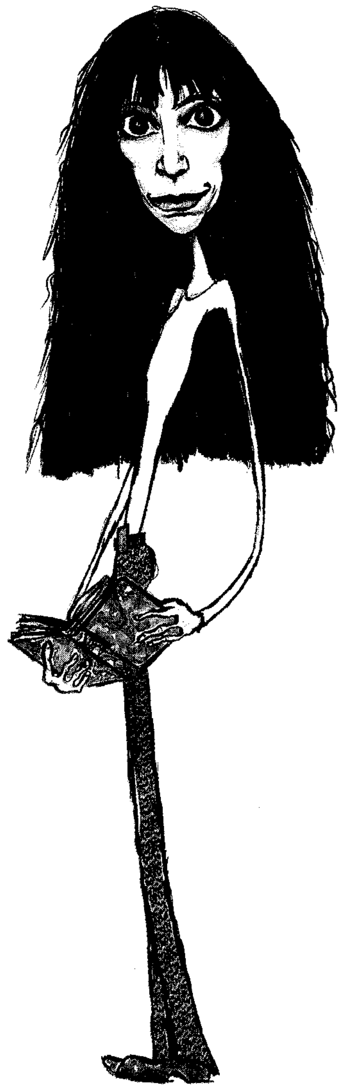
Patti Poetic—This season's SummerStage literary series kicks off with an evening featuring poet and semi-retired rock idol Patti Smith. Her first reading in fourteen years will include work from the seventies to the present. Also appearing will be fiction writer T. Coraghessan Boyle. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 8 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

Daylily Days—It's peak daylily season, and the spotlight will be on Isle of Capri, Gentle Shepherd, Becky Lynn, and Brocaded Gown, which are among the two hundred and ten different lilies that call the New York Botanical Garden home. Tours will be offered, as well as tips about growing and caring for your own flowers. (Bronx Park. July 10-11, from 11 to 4. Admission by contribution.)

Twilight Tango—It's Midsummer Night Swing, and the music in the air will put the tango and the mambo in your feet. July 7: The Tommy Dorsey orchestra. . . . ¶ July 8: Bob Hardwick and his orchestra. . . . ¶ July 9: Atilio Stampone *y su orquesta* (Argentina's Independence Day celebration). . . . ¶ July 10: Larry Harlow and his orchestra, with Nester Sanchez. (Fountain Plaza, Lincoln Center. Wednesdays through Saturdays, from 8:15 to 11. Dance instruction begins at 6:30 on Wednesdays through Fridays. Through July 24. For more information, call 875-5400.)

Readings—July 7 at 7: Maria Howe, Sharon Olds, and others will read from their own poetry, in conjunction with the current exhibit at the Whitney, "The Subject of Rape." (Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Tickets at the door on the evening of the reading.) . . . ¶ July 13 at 7: Edward P. Jones will read from his collection of short stories "Lost in the City." (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talk—July 13 at 6: Rob Johnson will talk about his unconventional furniture designs, after which Forces of Nature will give a demonstration of hip-hop dance. (Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St. No tickets necessary.)



Patti Smith reading at SummerStage.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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			7	8	9	10
11	12	13				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 22.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: Through July 8: "Map of the Human Heart" (directed by Vincent Ward). From July 9: "Beware of a Holy Whore" (1970, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German).
Theatre 2: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 3: "Orlando" (†).
Theatre 4: "Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann).
Theatre 5: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).
Theatre 6: "Orlando" (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through July 8: Theatre closed.
From July 9: "Heimat II: Chronicle of a Generation: Episodes 8 and 9" (Edgar Reitz, in German).

Newman Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
July 7: "Heimat II: Chronicle of a Generation: Episodes 6 and 7" (Edgar Reitz).
July 8: Theatre closed.
From July 9: A program of Italian films.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Sleepless in Seattle" (Nora Ephron).
Theatre 2: "Dennis the Menace" (Nick Castle).
Theatre 3: "Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Firm" (Sydney Pollack), with Tom Cruise.
Theatre 3: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Theatre 4: "Menace II Society" (†).
Theatre 5: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Theatre 6: "Cliffhanger" (†).
Theatre 7: Through July 8: "The Firm." From July 9: "Weekend at Bernie's 2" (Robert Klane).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Hard-Boiled" (†).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Un Coeur en Hiver" (†).
Theatre 2: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash).
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†); and (evenings only) "Guilty as Sin" (†).
Theatre 4: "Chain of Desire" (Temistocles Lopez).
Theatre 5: "The Lover" (Jean-Jacques Annaud).
Theatre 6: "American Heart" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Story of Qiu Ju" (Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Firm" (Sydney Pollack).
Theatre 2: "Sleepless in Seattle" (Nora Ephron).
Theatre 3: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash).
Theatre 4: "The Firm."
Theatre 5: Through July 8: "Sleepless in Seattle." From July 9: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 6: "Dennis the Menace" (Nick Castle).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through July 8: "Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann).
From July 9: "In the Line of Fire" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Menace II Society" (†).
Theatre 2: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Theatre 3: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash).
Theatre 4: (Matinées only) "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†); and (evenings only) "Guilty as Sin" (†).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Firm" (Sydney Pollack).
Theatre 3: "Sleepless in Seattle" (Nora Ephron).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Jurassic Park" (†).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).

Jeanne Tripplehorn and Tom Cruise in "The Firm."

ROBERT RISKO

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash).
Theatre 2: "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"House of Cards" (Michael Lessac).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Sliver" (Phillip Noyce).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Once Upon a Forest" (Charles Grosvenor), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (Rob Cohen), with Jason Scott Lee.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Howards End" (James Ivory).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "Last Action Hero" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Theatre 2: "Guilty as Sin" (†).
Theatre 3: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).

Art East Cinema, 1st Ave. at 61st. (644-1111)
Through July 8: "The Story of Qiu Ju" (Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin).
From July 9: To be announced.

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 2: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 3: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 4: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 5: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 6: "Jurassic Park" (†).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Dennis the Menace" (Nick Castle).
Theatre 2: Through July 8: "Cliffhanger" (†). From July 9: "Weekend at Bernie's 2" (Robert Klane).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Sleepless in Seattle" (Nora Ephron).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Dave" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 8: "Made in America" (Richard Benjamin). From July 9: "In the Line of Fire" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Menace II Society" (†).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"The Firm" (Sydney Pollack).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"The Firm" (Sydney Pollack), with Tom Cruise.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 8: "Jurassic Park" (†). From July 9: "In the Line of Fire" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sleepless in Seattle" (Nora Ephron).
Theatre 3: "Cliffhanger" (†).
Theatre 4: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash).
Theatre 5: Through July 8: "Sleepless in Seattle." From July 9: "Weekend at Bernie's 2" (Robert Klane).
Theatre 6: "Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern).
Theatre 7: "Dennis the Menace" (Nick Castle).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†); and (evenings only) "Menace II Society" (†).
Theatre 2: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Barjo" (directed by Jerome Boivin; in French).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Romper Stomper" (†).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Indecent Proposal" (Adrian Lyne).
Theatre 2: Through July 8: "Once Upon a Forest" (Charles Grosvenor), an animated film; and "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan). From July 9: "In the Line of Fire" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography" (Arnold Glassman, Todd McCarthy, and Stuart Samuels).
Theatre 2: "Dave" (†).
Theatre 3: "House of Cards" (Michael Lessac).
Theatre 4: "Brother's Keeper" (Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky), a documentary.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 3: "Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Ste[illegible]).
Theatre 4: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 5: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 6: "Cliffhanger" (†).
Theatre 7: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 8: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Theatre 9: "Jurassic Park" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Made in America" (Richard Benjamin).
Theatre 2: "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†).
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "Once Upon a Forest" (Charles Grosvenor), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Guilty as Sin" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through July 8: "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†).
From July 9: "In the Line of Fire" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Three of Hearts" (Yurek Bogayevicz).
Theatre 2: "Indecent Proposal" (Adrian Lyne).
Theatre 3: "Sliver" (Phillip Noyce).
Theatre 4: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (Rob Cohen), with Jason Scott Lee.
Theatre 5: "Indochine" (Régis Wargnier, in French).
Theatre 6: "Map of the Human Heart" (Vincent Ward).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Jurassic Park" (†).
Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Indecent Proposal" (Adrian Lyne).
57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Chain of Desire" (Temistocles Lopez).
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan).
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"The Story of Qiu Ju" (Zhang Yimou).
Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Music of Chance" (†).
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann).
Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Dave" (†).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
Through July 8: "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†).
From July 9: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 2: "Orlando" (†).
Theatre 3: "Orlando" (†).
Theatre 4: "Jacquot" (Agnès Varda; in French).
Theatre 5: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 6: "Un Coeur en Hiver" (†).
Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Jurassic Park" (†).
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 8: "Cliffhanger" (†). From July 9: "Weekend at Bernie's 2" (Robert Klane).
Theatre 3: "Sleepless in Seattle" (Nora Ephron), with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.
Theatre 4: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Firm" (Sydney Pollack).
Theatre 6: "Dennis the Menace" (Nick Castle).
Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Once Upon a Forest"; and (evenings only) "Guilty as Sin" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Made in America" (directed by Richard Benjamin).
Theatre 2: "Hot Shots! Part Deux" (Jim Abrahams).
Theatre 3: "Cliffhanger" (†).
Theatre 4: "Sleepless in Seattle" (Nora Ephron).
Theatre 5: "Posse" (Mario Van Peebles).
Theatre 6: "Dennis the Menace" (Nick Castle).
Theatre 7: Through July 8: "Once Upon a Forest" (Charles Grosvenor), an animated film. From July 9: "Weekend at Bernie's 2" (Robert Klane).
Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: Through July 8: "Menace II Society" (†). From July 9: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 2: "Menace II Society" (†).
Theatre 3: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash).
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"The Firm" (Sydney Pollack), with Tom Cruise.
National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through July 8: "The Ghost Ship" (see page 22); "The Leopard Man" (1943, directed by Jacques Tourneur); and "Isle of the Dead" (1945, Mark Robson).
July 9-11: "The Ghost Ship" (see page 22); "The Curse of the Cat People" (1944, Gunther Von Fritsch and Robert Wise); and "The Body Snatcher" (1945, Wise).
July 12-13: "The Ghost Ship" (see page 22); "Mademoiselle Fifi" (1945, Robert Wise); and "Youth Runs Wild" (1944, Mark Robson).
Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through July 8: "Sinbad the Sailor" (see page 22); and "The Spanish Main" (1945, Frank Borzage), with Paul Henreid and Maureen O'Hara.
July 9-10: "Annie Hall" (1977, Woody Allen), with Allen and Diane Keaton; and "Some Like It Hot" (1959, Billy Wilder), with Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis, and Jack Lemmon.
From July 11: "Sunset Boulevard" (1950, Billy Wilder), with Gloria Swanson and William Holden.
Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
July 7: "Ride the High Country" (1962, Sam Peckinpah), with Joel McCrea and Randolph Scott; and "The Ballad of Cable Hogue" (†).
July 8: "Bonnie and Clyde" (1967, Arthur Penn), with Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway; and "Badlands" (1973, Terrence Malick).
July 9-10: "The Wild One" (1954, Laslo Benedek), with Marlon Brando; and "On the Waterfront" (1954, Elia Kazan), with Brando, Lee J. Cobb, and Eva Marie Saint.
July 11: "Wild Strawberries" (1957, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish); and "Shame" (1968, Bergman; in Swedish).
July 12: "Stray Dog" (1949, Akira Kurosawa); and "Ikiru" (1952, Kurosawa).
July 13: "The Blue Dahlia" (1946, George Marshall), with Alan Ladd and Veronica Lake; and "The Great Gatsby" (1949, Elliott Nugent), with Ladd.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—July 8 at 2:30 and 6: "And the Ship Sails On" (1983, directed by Federico Fellini; in Italian). . . . ¶ July 9 at 2:30, 3, and 6, July 10-11 at 2, 2:30, and 5, and July 12-13 at 2:30, 3, and 6: A program of films from Mexico and other Latin-American countries.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—July 7 at 2, 5:45, and 9:30: "Rififi" (1955, Jules Dassin; in French). . . . ¶ July 7 at 4:15 and 8: "Pickpocket" (1958, Robert Bresson; in French). . . . ¶ July 8 at 2 and July 9 at 8: "Mississippi Mermaid" (1970, François Truffaut; in French). . . . ¶ July 8 at 4:15 and July 9 at 6: "Riptide" (1948, Yves Allégret; in French). . . . ¶ July 9 at 2 and 10:15 and July 10 at 6 and 10: "Jenny Lamour" (†). . . . ¶ July 9 at 4 and July 10 at 4 and 8: "Le Chat" (1971, Pierre Granier-Deferre; in French). . . . ¶ July 10-11 at 2: "Donkey Skin" (1975, Jacques Demy; in French). . . . ¶ July 11 and 13 at 4 and 8:15: "Doulos—The Finger Man" (1962, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French). . . . ¶ July 11 at 6:15 and 10:15 and July 13 at 2, 6:15, and 10:15: "The Clockmaker" (1974, Bertrand Tavernier; in French).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"All in the Family: The Classic Melodramas of John Stahl and Douglas Sirk." July 10 at 2: "Written on the Wind" (1957, Sirk), with Rock Hudson. . . . ¶ July 10 at 4: "Leave Her to Heaven" (1945, Stahl), with Gene Tierney. . . . ¶ July 11 at 2: "Only Yesterday" (1933, Stahl), with Margaret Sullavan. . . . ¶ July 11 at 4: "A Time to Love and a Time to Die" (1958, Sirk), with John Gavin.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—July 7 at 12:30 and 6:30: "The Baker's Wife" (1938, Marcel Pagnol; in French), with Raimu. . . . ¶ July 7 at 3:15 and 9: "The Well-Digger's Daughter" (1940, Pagnol; in French), with Raimu.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (570-3949)—July 9-10 at 3: "The Moon-Spinners" (1964, James Neilson), with Hayley Mills. . . . ¶ July 9 at 7: "The Godfather" (1972, Francis Ford Coppola), with Marlon Brando and Al Pacino. . . . ¶ July 10 at 7: "A Place in the Sun" (1951, George Stevens), with Montgomery Clift, Elizabeth Taylor, and Shelley Winters.

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)—July 7 at 8: "Hearts of the World" (1918, D. W. Griffith; silent), with Lillian and Dorothy Gish. (Organ accompaniment written and played by Lee Erwin.)

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MOVIES IN BRIEF

SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

The Bounding Main

ALTHOUGH seafaring movies are scarce these days, they were Saturday-matinée staples when studios stocked elaborate prop ships and audiences were willing to suspend disbelief in oceans created with water tanks and rear projection. Wildly opposite types of marine hokum from R.K.O. can be seen on revival screens this week: "The Ghost Ship," a 1943 melodrama that anchors the Film Forum's tribute to horror producer Val Lewton (it plays with a different co-feature every night through July 15); and the 1947 swashbuckler "Sinbad the Sailor" (playing July 7-8, at the Gramercy), with Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., camping exuberantly in the title role as he pays homage to his father's Thief of Bagdad.

In "The Ghost Ship" we get a dark, threatening version of the back-lot bounding main. Richard Dix stars as a seemingly even-keeled skipper who forms a homicidal idea of what it means to be responsible for the lives of his men. Directed by Mark Robson, it's just mid-level Lewton, but it bears all the trademarks of his production team: Nicholas Musuraca's eerie black-and-white cinematography, a tight plot, and shrewd, pragmatic staging that makes terrifying use of a pendulum-like hook and cascading links of chain.

With "Sinbad the Sailor" we get a fairy-tale version of R.K.O.'s big briny—a coruscating Technicolor hydrospace. The film is talky, but the action, when it comes, is gleefully cartoonish. Kids might enjoy it as a flesh-and-blood "Aladdin"—the flamboyant cast includes Anthony Quinn, Walter Slezak, and Maureen O'Hara. Adults in the mood will savor its ripe silliness: Fairbanks declares that O'Hara's beauty numbs him from "eye to thigh."

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

American Heart—Jack Kelson (Jeff Bridges), the hero of Martin Bell's film, is a fortyish ex-con who lives in a miserable furnished room in Seattle with his fourteen-year-old son, Nick (Edward Furlong). This is the sort of character that tends to bring out the worst in actors: a loser with big dreams. But Bridges wins the audience's belief. He doesn't try to *act* the movie's trite ideas about fatherhood and self-fulfillment and the American Dream: his physical eloquence makes everything Kelson does look like the result of a lifetime of constant trouble and lousy choices, and his dry, unassuming, lived-in acting style has a mysterious cumulative power. The documentary flatness of Bell's direction is ideal for recording a performance like this one. But when Bridges isn't onscreen the script (by Peter Silverman, from a story by Silverman, Bell, and Mary Ellen Mark) is left to its own devices, and the movie seems to flounder. The picture turns out to be about nothing more interesting than luck, and that's too bad, because Bridges' beautiful, radiantly precise acting has stirred in us the hope that it might actually be about grace. Also with Lucinda Jenny and Don Harvey.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/14/93.) (Village East Cinemas.)

The Ballad of Cable Hogue (1970)—Sam Peckinpah is in a relaxed and playful mood in this rambling comedy-Western, with Jason Robards (in fine form) as a desert rat who discovers a mudhole and turns water merchant, Stella Stevens as an ambitious whore, and David Warner as a lecherous self-ordained preacher. The picture needs more invention, more variety; it's a little too pleased with itself, and shots are held too long.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 7.)

Cliffhanger—For the first ten minutes, it lives up to its title. Up in the Rockies, Gabe Walker (Sylvester Stallone) and a damsel in distress dangle over an abyss, while the director, Renny Harlin, speeds up the editing until we giggle with nerves. But that rasping tension is soon smoothed away, as the plot sets off on its daft and hackneyed course. A hundred million dollars is being flown over the mountains; a criminal named Qualen (John Lithgow), as brilliant and psychotic as every other movie criminal these days, wants to get his hands on it, but watches it drop out of the air and fall on the peaks. Can Gabe beat him to it? Well, yes, but don't let on. The camera glides and wriggles into places no man has gone before, and some of the rock-face shots make your head spin. But who cares if somebody is hanging on for dear life when none of the lives at stake seem especially human? The picture aims at tautness and ends up with random desperation.—A.L. (6/21/93) (Village Theatre VII, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Gemini, and 84th Street Sixplex; through July 8.)

Un Coeur en Hiver—Claude Sautet's film, as its title suggests, is not much of a heartwarmer, but its cool look at thwarted passion is enthralling nonetheless. Stéphane (Daniel Auteuil) makes and mends violins; Camille (Emmanuelle Béart) plays them. The two of them shift from distrust to desire to disappointment—in other words, they go through all the motions of love except the making of it. This is so restrained it's shocking; we feel the terrible pressure of all that Stéphane might do with his life and yet refuses to attempt. With his spirit as buttoned down as his shirts, Auteuil offers a startling portrayal of failure, never hamming it up for the sake of our compassion. André Dussollier turns in an equally quiet performance as Stéphane's business partner and rival in love; add Béart's immaculate poise, and you wonder what strange district of Paris this is. The movie will hardly blow your mind, but there's nothing precious here; Sautet builds up a needling tension, aided by fine renditions of Ravel at his most difficult and plaintive. In French.—A.L. (6/7/93) (Village East Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Dave—Dave Kovic (Kevin Kline), the hero of Ivan Reitman's populist comedy, is a regular middle-class guy who happens to be a dead ringer for the President of the United States (also Kline). The screenplay, by Gary Ross, contrives to put Dave in the Oval Office, where he poses as the President and allows himself (initially) to be manipulated by the crafty White House chief of staff (Frank Langella). By the end of the picture, he has restored honesty and decency to the government, and has fallen in love with the First Lady (Sigourney Weaver). In the first half hour or so, the movie is hilarious, because its humor is mostly destructive; and Kline's performance as the real President is a chillingly funny portrait of Chief Executive as empty suit. But after the promisingly nasty beginning, the filmmakers settle into a sort of campaign mode, lulling and flattering the audience with a fairy-tale vision of the common man's victory over the Washington establishment. The movie's crowd-pleasing agenda inexorably saps its energy. Reitman and Ross are willing to sacrifice bite for across-the-board appeal, and they wind up with a political comedy that has no politics.—T.R. (5/17/93) (New York Twin, Quad Cinema, and Columbus Circle.)

Guilty as Sin—There's a germ of an amusi[illegible] idea in this farfetched "Jagged Edge" ripoff (from the same producer, Martin Ransohoff). The villain, a well-heeled gigolo, isn't a conventional ladies' man. He's a narcissistic male vamp: a sex-reversed femme fatale. But the germ doesn't have a chance to grow in the sterile atmosphere imposed by Sidney Lumet's journeyman direction and Larry Cohen's largely witless and mechanical script. Apart from Don Johnson, who camps things up as the bad guy, no one seems to be in on the joke—including Rebecca De Mornay, as his intrigued, then appalled attorney.—M.S. (Cinema II. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Olympia. Evenings only.)

Hard-Boiled—Hong Kong action specialist John Woo does a vivid cartoon version of the kinetics and the twisted-loyalty themes of Sam Peckinpah in this tale of duelling triads and lawmen. It gives the phrase "friendly fire" a new urban meaning: undercover police as well as innocent bystanders are caught in the crossfire when supercop Chow Yun-fat gets to the bottom of an enormous criminal arsenal. Images of a tearoom and a hospital shot up and transformed into charnel houses may reflect the chaos of Hong Kong, but Woo is no message-movie-maker—he works everything out strictly in terms of violent spectacle. His operatic excesses push it all into pitch-black comedy. Bodies don't just fall in this movie: they go into extravagant flailings that alternately resemble a tumbling act, a Twyla Tharp dance, and Sammy Davis, Jr.,'s pistol-tap routine. In Cantonese.—M.S. (Cinema Village.)

In the Line of Fire—With Clint Eastwood, John Malkovich, and Rene Russo; directed by Wolfgang Petersen. (Reviewed in this issue.) (19th Street East 6, Bay Cinema, New York Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Guild, 62nd & Broadway, and Embassy; starting July 9.)

Jenny Lamour (1947)—A stunningly well-made entertainment, this detective film by Henri-Georges Clouzot features the master actor Louis Jouvet in the role of a police inspector. His world is contrasted with that of the music hall, represented by the full-blown, hypersexual Suzy Delair. When this voluptuous slut sings "Avec Son Tra-la-la," she may make you wonder if the higher things in life are worth the trouble. With Bernard Blier as Delair's worshipful/masochist husband, Charles Dullin in the role of a lecherous hunchback, and, as a lesbian photographer, Simone Renant, at the time said to be the most beautiful actress in Paris. From a novel by S. A. Steeman, adapted by Clouzot and Jean Ferry. The film took the top prize at Venice, but in this country it never got the audience it deserved.—P.[illegible] (Walter Reade Theatre; July 9-10.)

Jurassic Park—Steven Spielberg's warm-blooded, state-of-the-art dinosaurs are a lot speedier than their nearest movie kin, the galumphing atomic-mutant monsters that crunched Japanese cities under their feet in the fifties and early sixties, and that enables the filmmaker to create dynamic stalk-and-chase sequences. The carnivorous dinos are efficient, resourceful predators: good scream-generators, in movie terms, because they're both intelligent and relentless, like the best serial killers. But neither they nor the placid herbivores inspire anything close to awe, even with the aid of audience stimulants like surging symphonic music (by the shameless John Williams) and repeated closeups of wide-eyed, openmouthed actors. The screenplay, which is credited to Michael Crichton and David Koepp, reduces Crichton's intricately constructed novel to its bare bones: people running away from hungry animals. Spielberg's monsters have a showroom shine, but the novelty wears off fast; for all the ingenuity of the movie's engineering, "Jurassic Park" doesn't have the imagination—or the courage—to take us any place we haven't been a thousand times before. It's just a creature feature on amphetamines.—T.R. (6/28/93) (34th St. East, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, Regency, and Metro Cinema.)

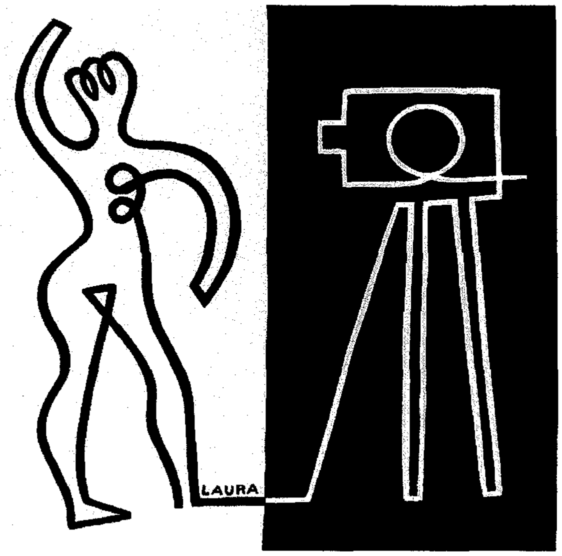
Last Action Hero—Here's a new idea: a thriller where the thrills lead nowhere. A boy named Danny (Austin O'Brien), bored at school and frightened at home, is enthralled by the screen exploits of Jack Slater (Arnold Schwarzenegger). With the help of a magic ticket, he crosses into Jack's world: an unreal place, where the hero always wins under a roasting sun and never gets more than a flesh wound. His adversaries may look like clichés—Charles Dance as a quiet hit man; Anthony Quinn, in his traditional look-at-me mode, as a Sicilian mobster—but that is precisely the point: movie conventions exist to be mocked, and "Last Action Hero" is determined to have fun with them. There isn't a trace of acid; the director, John McTiernan, remains devoted to the genre that he mastered in "Die Hard." But the scattiness of the film—the way that it slips between fact and fiction, and fidgets from one gag to the next—may still be enough to shake the confidence of a young audience brought up on Schwarzenegger pictures; everything they used to believe in, all the toy violence and dizzy stuntwork, is being snapped back in their faces. The movie labors the point, and outstays its welcome; but it's a bright and daring direction for Schwarzenegger to have taken, and therefore one that he may live to regret.—A.L. (7/5/93) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Baronet, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Menace II Society—This inner-city crime melodrama, set in Watts, is a speedy, violent, adolescent-cynical take on the no-hope lives of young black men. The filmmakers—twenty-one-year-old twins Allen and Albert Hughes—aren't interested in the tragic irony of the classic gangster film; they aim, instead, for the throwaway, life-is-cheap tone of grimy fifties B-pictures. They move from horror to horror in a businesslike, deadpan way that reflects, with frightening conviction, the thoroughness of their characters' alienation. The Hugheses are so scrupulous, so comprehensive, in their refusal to do the usual things that they leave themselves short on expressive options. As the picture goes along, you actually start to wish it were a little squarer, that the filmmakers would give you something more to hold on to than the grinding pulp momentum that substitutes here for true dramatic structure. The Hugheses achieve some brilliant and memorable sequences, and the lack of sentimentality is a step in the right direction, but the movie winds up running in place.—T.R. (5/31/93) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, 68th St. Playhouse, and Embassy. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin. Evenings only.)

Much Ado About Nothing—On the sunny side of the Bard. Kenneth Branagh leads us through the tiffs and deceptions of Shakespeare's comedy, all shot in and around a Tuscan villa. Branagh does not pay much heed to the virtues of restraint. This is confirmed by most of the performances—Branagh and Emma Thompson as Benedick and Beatrice, splashing out with grand comic gestures, and a mangy Dogberry from an unintelligible Michael Keaton. The movie's jollity feels forced—it's more of a guided tour than a relaxed show of wit. What potency there is comes from the characters who refuse to be gripped by good cheer—Don John, played by Keanu Reeves as a pinup with malice, and Don Pedro, played by Denzel Washington, whose cool gravity shames the rest of the movie.—A.L. (5/10/93) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Music of Chance—Jim Nashe (Mandy Patinkin) is a mixture of tough guy and wandering spirit. On a country road he picks up Pozzi (James Spader), a gambler down on his luck. In one of the random, risky twists in which the film specializes, Nashe decides to help him out. They go to a lonely country house, inhabited by a pair of wealthy oddballs called Flower (Charles Durning) and Stone (Joel Grey), who trounce Pozzi at poker and then demand an unusual payment: he and Nashe must build a stone wall on the grounds. From here on the movie becomes an unlikely fable about power and freedom, as Nashe and Pozzi are put through their paces like creatures of an author's cruel fancy. Philip Haas does well to curb the threat of whimsy in all this; he cuts Paul Auster's original novel back to the bone and toughens the progress of the plot. There's nothing he can do about Spader's silly, unconvincing Pozzi, but Patinkin is a great help; he looks so grave and laid-back that you almost end up believing in the whole thing.—A.L. (6/7/93) (Paris.)

Orlando—Sally Potter's film is based on Virginia Woolf's 1928 novel, which is not one of the author's major works. The story is a fragile piece of whimsy about an English nobleman born in the Elizabethan era who does not grow old or die and thus becomes the central figure in a series of historical tableaux that take the viewer right into the twentieth century; at a certain point, the title character discovers that he has turned into a woman. Potter (who also wrote the screenplay) takes Woolf's exercise in frivolity awfully seriously; the movie is like a Benny Hill sketch performed with fringe-theatre solemnity. And if it weren't for bad acting, this picture wouldn't have any acting at all. Tilda Swinton, who plays Orlando, may not actually wink at the audience, but she always looks as if she were about to. Her smug performance is perfectly suited to the film's arch, knowing tone. Potter and Swinton manage to make androgyny seem at least as dull as conventional sexuality.—T.R. (6/14/93) (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



LAURA LJUNGKVIST

Romper Stomper—As a couple of immigrants are waylaid in a dank underpass and kicked into unconsciousness, you start to suspect that "Romper Stomper" may not have been produced by Merchant-Ivory, and this is confirmed when one of the heroes turns to the camera and yells, "Fuck! Off!" This is in fact the first movie to tackle the topic of Australian neo-Nazi skinheads. Written and directed by Geoffrey Wright, it tells the story of Hando (Russell Crowe), Davey (Daniel Pollock), and their band of merry maniacs. They prowl the streets of Melbourne, looking for trouble; when there isn't any, they make it up for themselves, waging a small war against the local Vietnamese. Wright follows much the same course; his frenetic camerawork—punching, dancing, and furious sex all edited together, for example—seems to egg the rebels on, as if they knew they were being watched and wanted to put on a good show. The plot revolves around a dropout called Gabe (Jacqueline McKenzie), who joins up with Hando but slowly gravitates toward Davey. Neither sounds very sympathetic, but both actors find more in their roles than you expect—even more, possibly, than Wright intended. There is something intense—a kind of dumb delicacy—within their thuggish instincts, and by the end the movie has transformed itself into a desperate fight for love. Wright's disturbing subject never gets the cool look it deserves, but he is rarely crass, and sheer nervous energy carries the film forward and pins you down.—A.L. (Film Forum.)

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)—Despite its European never-never-land setting and an outright horrifying villainess, the Disney version of the Grimm's fairy tale is a pleasing, down-to-earth American princess fantasy. Disney gave us a Snow White who whistles while she works, enlists an entire peaceable kingdom of animals to help her do dishes and windows, and succeeds at getting seven childlike, scruffy, and bumptious men—who appear to be made of plant bulbs and partly filled potato sacks—to clean up their acts. In her own fluty tones, she means business. The animation is literal-minded but luxurious. With the voices of Adriana Caselotti as Snow White, Lucille LaVerne as the Queen, and Billy Gilbert as Sneezy. David Hand was the supervising director; Frank Churchill and Larry Morey wrote the bright, inventive songs.—M.S. (Sutton, and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, and 86th Street East Twin. Matinées only. . . . ¶ Guild, and 62nd & Broadway; through July 8.)

What's Love Got to Do with It—The film version of Tina Turner's life isn't bad, considering that her story inconveniently lacks the tragic ending that filmmakers usually require to give shape to the rambling, unstructured existence of a musician. Tina, at fifty-three, is still performing and recording, and in the absence of the snuffed-out-in-her-prime option the screenwriter, Kate Lanier, and the director, Brian Gibson, have constructed the movie as a kind of feminist survival story: Tina (Angela Bassett) rises to fame as part of a husband-and-wife act, the Ike and Tina Turner Revue, but then breaks away from her brutal, domineering spouse (Laurence Fishburne) and climbs back to the top of the charts on her own. Much of the movie is grim and disturbing: Ike abuses Tina in just about every way a man can abuse a woman, and the domestic-violence scenes are harrowingly graphic. The movie has a manic-depressive rhythm that keeps the audience absorbed: Gibson alternates scenes of Tina's misery with rousing, superbly staged musical numbers. Bassett scrupulously imitates Tina's spectacular dance moves, but there's no let-it-rip joy in her performances, and not much sex either. Fishburne's astonishing portrayal of Ike is what holds the movie together. The actor builds, in precise increments, a devastating portrait of a macho control freak; he even finds a kind of ghastly humor in the character's madness. Also with Jenifer Lewis and Vanessa Bell Calloway.—T.R. (6/28/93) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, Cinema 3rd Avenue, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

MAN OF LETTERS

WRITERS can be contentious in groups. They can be voluble and disorganized. And they aren't often adept at taking meetings. So it was a relief to read that the American Center of PEN, the international organization of writers, had elected Louis Begley as its president. Mr. Begley has been a novelist since 1991, but he's been a lawyer for much longer than that. He's written two much admired books in his brief literary career ("Wartime Lies" and "The Man Who Was Late"), and he's just finished a third, which, he says, is about dying. He's also in the process of organizing a large cement plant in Shandong Province, China, for some Korean clients of his. "I don't think I'm likely to go to Shandong," he said the other day in his office at the venerable firm of Debevoise & Plimpton. "I'll probably go to Beijing."

Mr. Begley looked happy about his new post. He's a slight, fastidious man of fifty-nine, with a sad face and a delicate way of talking. He said he was pleased to have been elected, although a little surprised, and that, of course, he'd voted for himself. "Wouldn't it be awful not to?" he said, waving his reading glasses in the air. White papers lay here and there around his desk, and the computer screen was on, but he didn't seem ruffled or hurried in any way. He wore a beige gabardine suit and colorful enamelled cufflinks, among other things, and a pair of lawyerly brogues. The president's term is usually one year, he said, but it's often extended. He was a little anxious about his new duties, and hoped that the staff at PEN would help him out. He planned to battle "political correctness on the left as well as the right." PEN's mission was to protect freedom of expression and to foster "serious culture," and he was all for that.

"I go to the gym, as I suppose everybody does in New York," he said. "I hop up and down on a machine called a Stairmaster. It's quite effective, actually, and it's the one place I watch television, except when there's a Presidential debate or a natural disaster. There I see these videocassettes of songs. Grown men and women object when one asks to have the channel switched to CNN, for example, because they want to see this kind of masturbatory soft porn. I don't argue with them; I just keep bopping along."

Mr. Begley said that he liked writers. He had a lot of friends who were lawyers, also, and didn't think he had to choose between the two. For him, writing wasn't a stressful or neurotic undertaking. In fact, it was the opposite. "I know of no other activity that is as pleasant as writing," he said. "It somehow seems to displace many anxieties, many thoughts that I would consider hectic." He went on to say that usually he wrote on his dining-room table (he has a study in the country), using a Toshiba laptop, because his own handwriting was elegant but completely illegible. He'd finished his last novel in May, during a two-week trip to Venice, but most of the work had been done steadily over a year of weekends. All he would say about it was "I think it starts out being quite amusing, and maybe it's amusing throughout, but it ends badly, at least for one person."

Mr. Begley said that he was reading Balzac now, along with the stories of a Swiss writer named Robert Walser. "Walser's productive years coincided eerily with Kafka," he said. "Then, toward the end of the twenties, he checked into an insane asylum." The telephone twittered now and again: news, presumably, from Shandong. "I'm very organized," Mr. Begley said. "I'm brutally efficient." He had no idea why he had started writing books, suddenly, at the

ISABELLE DERVAUX

age of fifty-five. "An appointment with the Muse," he said. "I don't mean to be flippant."

HOT ASSIGNMENT

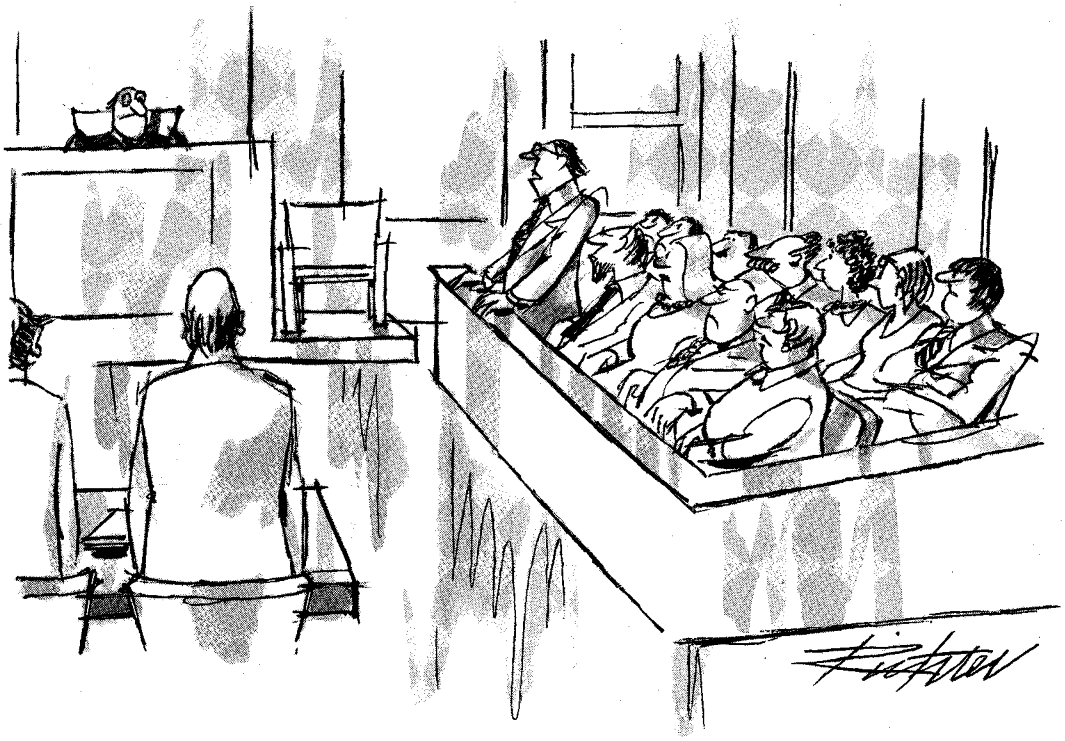
"THIS is Dubrovnik in 1991," said Peter Galbraith, holding up the tail of an exploded mortar shell. "And this is a little part of the Franciscan monastery in Dubrovnik." He pulled at a small piece of wood wedged between the fins. He was standing in the living room of his house on Capitol Hill, in Washington, rifling through his trophies. A framed letter named Galbraith as the recipient of Pakistan's highest civilian honor, the Sitara-i-Quaid-i-Azam. Nearby was a photograph of some Afghan freedom fighters, friends of his, posing with guns of various kinds. "That's outside Jalalabad, the day the Soviets withdrew," Mr. Galbraith said. Leafing through an album, he found a photograph of himself in northern Iraq, standing with two Kurds under a sign that read "We liberated Kurdistan from Aggressors." Mr. Galbraith said, "There I am on top of Saddam's place. There is Saddam's bedroom. There is the view from Saddam's bedroom."

Mr. Galbraith enjoys adventure, and that is a good thing. He is about to leave his house, which is filled with the accumulation of his travels, and move to Zagreb, as the first United States Ambassador to Croatia. It's an assignment that pleases him greatly. "I would say that I get pretty outraged with things," he said. "I can't help being moved on the part of victims." In fact, he has made a career of it. During fourteen years as a staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he has sought out victims from Pakistan—where he helped secure the release of Benazir Bhutto from prison—to Kurdistan. He documented Iraq's use of chemical weapons on Kurdish villagers in 1988, and that evidence persuaded the Senate to vote sanctions against Baghdad.

Mr. Galbraith, a bulky, dishevelled man of forty-three, is capable of great, theatrical shows of indignation, and now, as he talked about the Kurds, he banged his fist on a table. "The Iraqis threatened to break diplomatic relations. They denied the charges—and you know what? They stopped using chemical weapons against the Kurds." Modesty has never been a Galbraith strong point (he's the son of the economist John Kenneth Galbraith), and in his time on Capitol Hill he has achieved an unusually high profile for a committee staff member. While most of his colleagues shy away from an attributed quote, he has appeared regularly on television shows like "Nightline." He has also scrambled up Afghan hillsides with mujahideen militia and crossed the Tigris in a canoe under mortar fire.

People in Washington think that Zagreb—nestled, as it is, between a savage war and long, sandy beaches—is the perfect posting for Mr. Galbraith. "The victims are people being shot, people kicked out of villages, women who've been raped," he said. Last November, Galbraith was in Sarajevo, escorting his old friend Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan on a congressional tour. Not far from the spot where Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated, Senator Moynihan strayed into the firing line of Serb snipers. "Senator! Would you please not stand where you are standing?" the Washington *Post* reported Galbraith as saying. The Senator, who has told and retold the story, was one of Mr. Galbraith's prime sponsors for his new job.

The Clinton Administration says that it is committed to establishing the war-crime tribunals in the former Yugoslavia that have been authorized by the United Nations. A large part of Mr. Galbraith's job will be preparing cases for them. He's ready for that task, having just persuaded Kurdish leaders to hand over fourteen tons of Iraqi-secret-police documents, which are being reviewed by United States and United Nations officials for evidence of war crimes. Croatia, with a population of less than five million, already has half a million refugees, many with horrible stories to tell. The United States does not have full diplomatic relations with Belgrade now, and the current United States Ambassador to Sarajevo is stationed in Washington. "For all these reasons, Zagreb is the principal post for this crisis," Mr. Galbraith said. Then he leaned forward with an intensity that seemed reckless, perhaps even undiplomatic. "This is an Ambassadorship where you can really do something," he said.



"We find the defendant very telegenic."

LIGHT RELIEF

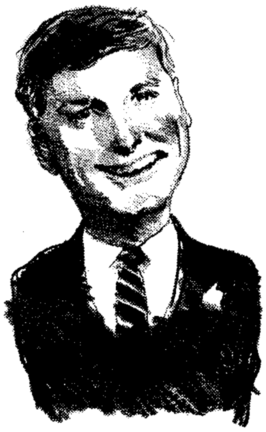
AS far as we can tell, this city's preoccupation with public rest rooms is a seasonal thing. It may have to do with all the tourists in town, or with the succession of temperate days. Whatever the explanation, it was last July that the French firm J. C. Decaux brought its self-cleaning outhouse to town for a much publicized demonstration. That event, as we dutifully reported at the time, was sponsored, in part, by a family foundation that supports environmental projects. Now comes the Urban Outhouse Design Competition, of which the eleven winning entries (along with four others) are currently on exhibit at the Municipal Art Society, in the Villard Houses, on Madison Avenue. The show was preceded by a panel debate on the subject of public toilets in New York City. Kent Barwick, who is the president of the Art Society, says he was surprised that so many people turned out—there were around a hundred of them—on such a pleasant summer evening to discuss toilets.

The exhibit itself is eclectic; it's up a flight of stairs, next to a couple of rest rooms. There's a plan for an outhouse shaped like a large chrome fire hydrant, and a plan for one with a weathervane on top. Makoto Sei Watanabe, from Tokyo, proposed a contraption with long glass walls. By various chemical and electric means, the glass becomes opaque when someone's inside. "This creates a kind of performance for passersby," Watanabe noted. One of the proposed outhouses is supposed to be attached to a bus stop, and another is to be constructed from recycled cans. The first-place design shows a circular structure made from steel/aluminum plates, with a flat translucent roof. The outhouse would be fully automated inside: the spray-jet-and-mist cleaning system would be radar-controlled, and so would the security system, which includes a panic button "for emergency egress."

It's all theoretical at this point (none of the outhouses have been built), so people viewing the show have to use their imagination. The Castellas, of Staten Island, were reminded of Election Day. "You know, how you go into the booths," said Mr. Castella, whose daughter Krystina had a design in the show. He inspected the designs as he ate a soft pretzel. "That one looks like a missile," he said. It was called the Bullet Universal Access Toilet, and it included high-pressure water jets and halogen ceiling lights. The background of the plan (John Beckmann and Margaret

THE END OF HISTORY

"Until Dan Quayle hit it big, did anything ever happen there?" I asked Sherman Goldenberg, the Midwestern bureau chief of *Trailer Life*, *MotorHome*, and *RV Business*. We were enjoying some Sunday-afternoon lakeside scenery in northern Indiana and talking about Huntington, forty-five miles to the southeast, the home town of both Sherman and the former Vice-President. Sherman had been making a noble effort to explain Huntington in distinctive terms, but by his own appraisal it was a place that boiled down to "every cliché you ever heard about Midwestern small-town life . . . pure Norman Rockwell, totally unnoteworthy."



BARRY BLITT

My itinerary called for me to rise early the next day and begin scouring Huntington for some previously obscured clue—a metaphor that would reveal the forces, cosmic or mundane, that had made inevitable the new Dan Quayle Center and Museum, Huntington's only tourist attraction. The museum's opening was being timed to coincide with Heritage Days, an annual summer festival in Huntington, the highlight of which is a race along the Little Wabash River by thousands of plastic ducks.

"There was an enormous void," Sherman told me. "We were just there to be raised, and then, some time later, when we grew up, we'd go somewhere else and be somebody. There was a need that was much bigger than hormones. You felt that something had to pop. But it never did pop there. It seemed that it popped everywhere else, and then some of it washed back over Huntington, but there was no big silver salute that went off right there."

What happened instead was deus ex machina: Danny Quayle—whom Sherman remembers during high school as being "not really a nonentity, I guess you could say he was an entity, yeah, O.K., he was an entity"—wound up flying free on Air Force Two, a feat of levitation that continues to induce bipartisan disbelief.

That night, I drove to Huntington and checked into a motel and ate a coffee-shop hamburger steak covered with a brown gravy that I'm still wondering about. The museum exhibit turned out to be a collection of baby pictures, family-vacation and Bible-school snapshots, a golf bag, a Bible, two high-school yearbooks, and an Indy 500 crash helmet. One caption read "The vice president of the United States has many duties. During his four years as vice president, Dan Quayle visited many nations and dealt with many world leaders, including King Fahd of Saudi Arabia during the Persian Gulf War. In his constitutional role as vice president, Dan served as president of the United States Senate." The entire exhibit could be scrutinized in a leisurely eight minutes.

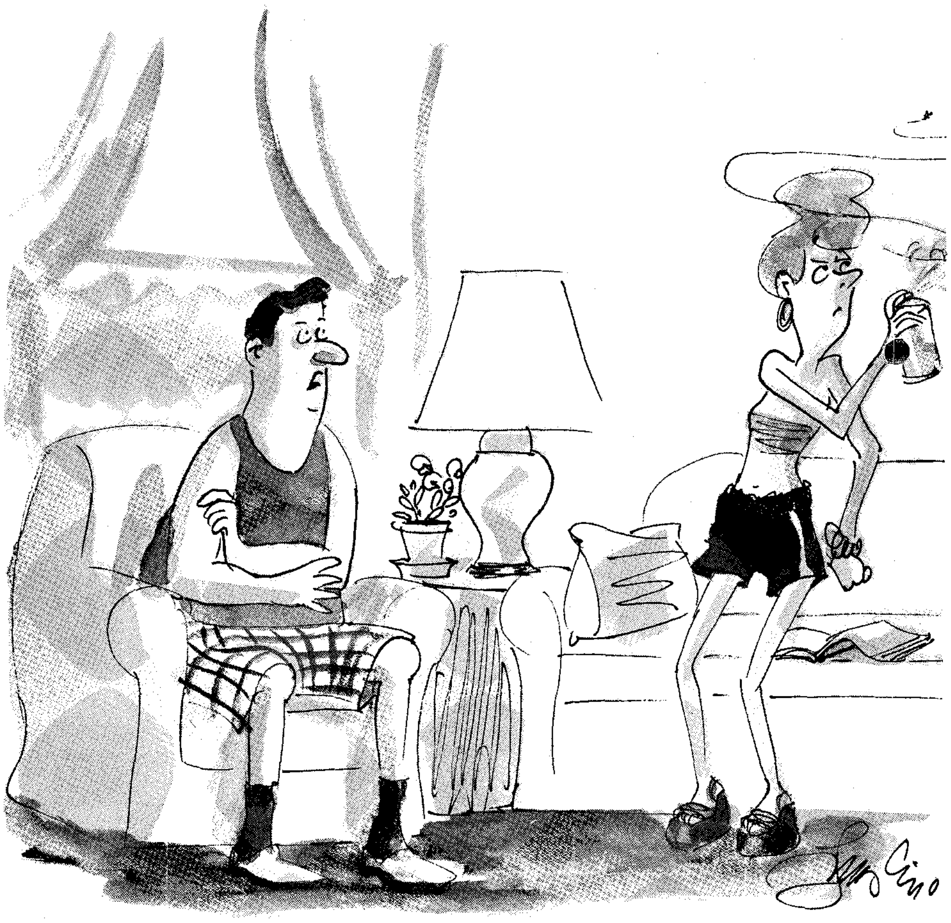
The museum's curator, Tom Mehl, told me, "Most people know that Dan Quayle was Vice-President from 1989 to 1993, but when they come here they want to see Dan Quayle growing up—what he was like. They want to see his Little League uniform, which we have."

At the Huntington City Township Public Library, I spoke with Joan Keefer, who has an interest in local history and has traced the Quayle family genealogy to the twelfth century. She referred me to, among other illustrious Huntingtonians, Tommy Thompson, who a few years back discovered a treasure-filled shipwreck off the coast of the Carolinas, and Eiffel Plasterer, a.k.a. Mr. Bubbles and "the dean of American bubble blowers." When he wasn't teaching science at the local high school, Plasterer was travelling the Chautauqua circuit and coining such insights as "Bubbles will last if they do not break" and "You never grow too old to blow bubbles." Eventually, though, he did.

Several people in Huntington mentioned to me that Indiana had produced four previous Vice-Presidents. There was only one, however, whom anyone could remember by name—Thomas Marshall, Woodrow Wilson's No. 2, who opined that what the country needed was a good five-cent cigar. This piece of wisdom has faded to the point where many Hoosiers, vacillating, will now say something like "Or maybe it was Marshall who compared the Vice-Presidency with a bucket of warm spit. Or was that Alben Barkley?" Actually, it was John Nance Garner and a pitcher of warm piss.

I called Sherman and expressed fear that Huntington's collective impression that something had happened there was illusory.

"You know, I've been thinking about this, and something else did happen," he said. "It took place over a three-month period, capped off by two hours, in 1964: Huntington made the finals of the state high-school-basketball tournament. 'Butler Floor in '64'—the finals were held at Butler University, in Indianapolis. That was the pinnacle for the town—I don't think many people are going to argue about that. And we didn't win. We got beat by Lafayette Jefferson, by three points. I'm not sure Quayle would exceed in impact that finals game. If we'd had Quayle *and* made it to the state finals in the same year, that'd be a good apples-and-apples situation. I don't know if you'd create an entire museum to commemorate that game. I don't want to sell Danny short. Because of him, history *has* visited Huntington. That's the significance of Danny Quayle. It could have been Joe Etter, the barber, getting elected Vice-President. It could have been Van Bailey, who's now the principal of the high school. It would have been *better* if Van Bailey had done it, because he played basketball. But Danny got the job." —MARK SINGER



"Don't kill it! That mosquito is carrying my DNA."

• •

Janik, of the design firm Axis Mundi, in Manhattan, were the creators) was colored a severe space-age blue, and the outhouse itself was shown as twelve feet tall and sheathed in solid brass. It operated on "a fifteen-minute time cycle," but the consequences of exceeding that limit were not explained.

The people at the Vermont Structural Slate Company, in Fair Haven, Vermont, sponsored the competition. "We wanted to catch people's attention," Craig Markcrow, who runs the slate quarry with his father, explained. He said they'd done a similar thing a few years back, in which "the subject was gazebos." Over the telephone, you could hear the hum of rock-cutting machines. Entrants in the current competition were told to think of outhouses that could suitably be situated in Grand Army Plaza. A panel of judges (Philip Johnson was one) deliberated on a total of three hundred and nine designs. Among them were an outhouse made entirely of toilet paper, an outhouse that included homeless shelters, and a monument to outhouses, placed on a Greek pedestal, with a ladder leading to it.

That sounded unusual enough to warrant a call to one of the judges, an architect in town named Henry Myerberg. "It was a difficult process," he said. "There were a lot of fanciful designs that were interesting visually but really not an appropriate response for a big-city environment." One prospective outhouse was shaped like a toilet plunger. The man-size fire hydrant—the designers, from St. Simons Island, Georgia, named it Top Dog, and it took third place—was the best of what he called "the art pieces." But in the end the judges settled for functionality. The winners—Cynthia Sours and John White, two Americans living in Paris (prize: $5,000)—produced a cool, minimalist model that looked as if it would work properly. "Bells and whistles don't have to go off every time you have to relieve yourself," Mr. Myerberg said. "There are other opportunities for that in the city." ♦

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LETTER FROM BOSNIA

UNSAFE ZONE

The Serbs are the de-facto winners of the war in Bosnia. Who are they, and what's going on in their heads?

BY ANNA HUSARSKA

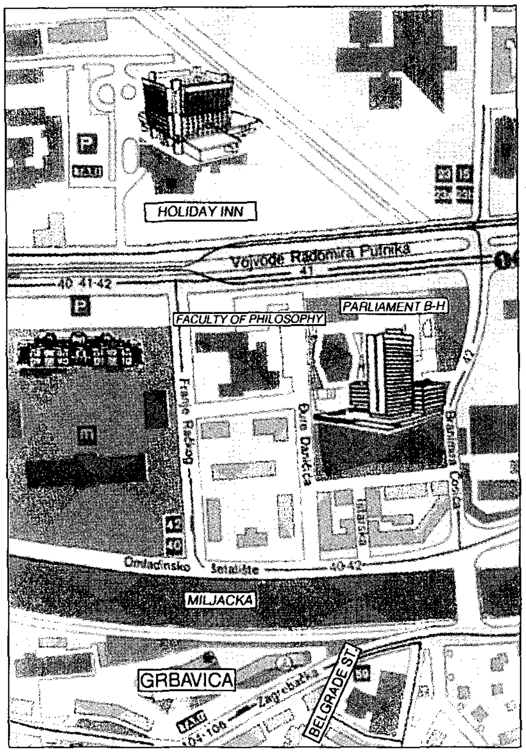
SARAJEVO

In another time, I would have called Lieutenant Dušan Jović my neighbor, because he lives only four blocks from where I am staying. But it so happens that every day Dušan gives orders to his soldiers to fire their guns in my general direction. This is not neighborly.

In the narrow physical space that separates us are Vojvode Radomira Putnika Avenue, known here as "sniper alley"; the burned-out building of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Parliament; the Sarajevo University's Faculty of Philosophy; and the thin ribbon of the Miljacka River. But we are worlds apart, for between us runs the front line: Dušan, an officer in the Army of the self-proclaimed Republika Srpska, shoots from Grbavica, a hilltop quarter of Sarajevo held by the Bosnian Serbs, whereas I'm staying in the Holiday Inn, which is in the territory under the control of the Bosnian government—that is, in the part of town under siege.

Although it's on the besieging side, Grbavica is not a safe place, either, because the Bosnians—my real neighbors—are shooting back. Ducking their bullets is made easier thanks to makeshift shelters: patched-together military tents that float across some streets to obstruct the view of snipers, and bricks piled up as ramparts along the exposed stretches. At a dangerous crossroad, people shout "*Pazi*" ("Watch out") and "*Brzo*" ("Quickly"), words I have learned in similar circumstances on the other bank of the Miljacka.

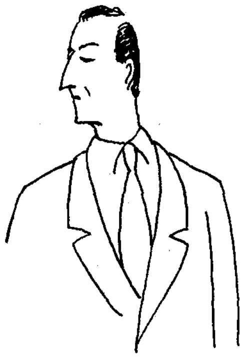
Dušan's headquarters are on the second floor of an ugly apartment building on Belgrade Street. When I showed up unannounced one morning, a soldier went to fetch him. I waited in a dim room that smelled of cheap tobacco and sweat. On a coffee table set with four plastic Coca-Cola mats towered a bulky hand-cranked military phone. It was connected to a wooden box (full of switches and plugs) installed on a Formica shelf, and this was wired to two truck batteries standing on a rug. An open pseudo-Oriental fan was attached with Scotch tape just below the wooden box. Above it sat two pieces of mortar shell ("Yesterday's," one soldier explained) and a dirty-pinkish toy plastic dog in Yugo-Disney style.



In Sarajevo, the Holiday Inn is on the front line.

COURTESY OF GEODETSKI ZAVOD U SARAJEVU

Dušan came in after a few minutes, obviously just awakened, and annoyed by my visit. The day before, four of his soldiers had been killed by a mortar fired from my side of Sarajevo, but his bad mood seemed to be caused by an ordinary hangover rather than hostility. He had probably spent the night nursing his grief with slivovitz—a soldier had carried out an empty bottle and dirty glasses when I arrived. He is tall and handsome, his hair is dark and wavy, and his face is covered with light-brown freckles, which make him look even younger than his twenty-six years. Dušan was unwilling to chat, so I had to drag every piece of information out of him: he was born in Knin (in what is now Serb-occupied Croatia) and went to secondary school in Sarajevo; before the war started, he served in the J.N.A., the Yugoslav National Army (and then, like many other officers, he simply took the J.N.A. insignia off his uniform); he is married. His wife's name is Biljana. She is from Grbavica. No, she was not here, she was in Sokolac (fifty kilometres east of Sarajevo, still deeper in Serb-held Bosnia). She works as a nurse in a military hospital. His face lit up only once, as he told me about his five-month-old daughter, Ana, who is beautiful and "so tiny."



There was nothing nasty about Dušan; he didn't give me any lessons in history, any talk about Greater Serbia. He was neither a warmonger nor a Muslim-basher. Except that his line of business is killing people who live in another part of town, he is a nice guy. The next day, I met him again, at the funeral of one of his men. The cemetery had some thirty fresh graves, topped by simple wooden crosses inscribed in Cyrillic and with towels or pieces of white cloth draped over them. On the back of the cross prepared for Dušan's soldier, Rade Vidaković, were nailed three new shirts, in their plastic wrapping, which, according to local tradition, meant that he was a bachelor. He wore a medium.

A captain from Rade's unit gave the eulogy. It was about Catholic agents (i.e., Croats), Ustashi hordes (ditto), and the mujahideen (the Bosnian Muslim Army), all of whom were waging a jihad to eliminate the Serb nation. He praised Rade for having died for Serbia, just as his ancestors had died in the fourteenth-century battle of Kosovo Polje (in which the Serbs were defeated by the Ottoman Turks). During the eulogy, Dušan stood to one side, speaking with other uniformed men. Afterward, he ordered his soldiers to fire a salute. Then a friend of Rade's went around with small glasses and served everybody slivovitz. I asked him what Rade did before the war.

"He was a gymnastics teacher. His pupils adored him."

"Did he have a girlfriend?"

"Yes, but she lives in Sarajevo, on the Bosnian side, if the Turks"—he meant the Muslims—"didn't kill her yet."

Once the grave was filled, the women threw sugar cubes on it, and everyone dispersed: Dušan went to Sokolac to spend a few days of leave with his wife, and Rade's father, Mitar, invited me to his house for the *sofra*, or post-funeral meal.

Most of the participants in this feast were men, and all were Serbs. Some of them were hostile to me (because I was a journalist, presumably spreading lies about them); others wanted to convey their hatred of Muslims. The argument—delivered to me by a furniture designer in his forties, who insisted that I try the delicious veal and the homemade cottage cheese, and that I drink more slivovitz—went: "We, the Serbs, are the oldest and the most courageous people in the Balkans, but Communism oppressed us. Now we do not want Islam to make us backward. Muslims are primitive; they want our women to wear a veil." (In more than a month in Sarajevo, I did not see even one woman in a chador.) "Unlike the Islamic mujahideen, the Serbs do not want to impose themselves or the Orthodox religion upon anyone." At that point, I reached for a pickled pepper and limited my answer to a nod; there was no point in arguing. (Some of the men around the table were armed.) Only Mitar thought that Muslims were just like Serbs: some were good and some were bad. For saying that, he got a scornful look from the other men. Mitar, a partisan during the Second World War, was liberated in 1945 from a P.O.W. camp outside Tours by United States soldiers. He declared that "America is O.K.," but he said it in private.

THE crossing from Sarajevo, which has been besieged by the Bosnian Serbs since April, 1992, to Pale, the capital of the Republika Srpska, is relatively easy, although it can be risky. The front here consists of the Sarajevo airport, which is controlled by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), and perhaps a mile of no man's land. In this crazy war, however, even the no man's land is inhabited, if only sparsely; there is a grocery store, but most of the houses have been destroyed by Bosnian and Serb shelling.

An armored car offers protection from sniper bullets but not from mortars, so it's a good idea to drive full speed through the airfield. The obligatory first stop on the Serb side is the Lukavica barracks. The road in front of them is lined with mounds of dirt in which tanks covered with camouflage nets are entrenched every fifty yards or so; spent 105-mm. shells lie scattered around. Nobody was manning the tanks when John Pomfret, from the Washington *Post*, and I arrived one day, in the early morning, and that is probably why we arrived safely. The commandant of the barracks, a man named Branko (civilian clothes, good English), made us wait an hour, for no particular reason (meanwhile, two other armored cars with journalists joined us, forming a convoy), and then let us all go on.

The drive from Lukavica to Pale is less than twenty kilometres, most of it up a mountainside, and tourist guides would describe it as scenic, with a panoramic view of Sarajevo. But these days military manuals are more appropriate guides, and they would say the view is of a defenseless enclave. In other words, the town is sitting there as if in the palm of a hand, and even a beginner in the art of artillery fire can earn his merit badges from the gun emplacements above, because every angle has been ranged (that is, rehearsed) over the past year. The total number of civilians killed in Sarajevo since the beginning of the siege is estimated at ten thousand; some fifty thousand others have been wounded.

The view from the mountain road is partly obstructed by a line of huge metal shields and overturned cars serving as protection against incoming fire from the Bosnian forces, and the vantage is dotted every hundred yards or so with little log cabins. In front of them, soldiers busy themselves around green wooden boxes of ammunition; during ceasefires—of which there have been two dozen or so—they play cards and drink. Below the cabins are the Serb artillery positions, from which the soldiers shell Sarajevo. There are said to be some six hundred artillery positions in the hills.

Once in Pale, we went to get our accreditations at what is called "the Republika Srpska's ministry of information," which is a tiny room in the attic of a decrepit socialist-style hotel called the Olimpik Pansion. Two young women were on duty: Dragana, a former medical student, who was rather pretty, under heavy makeup, and Sretenka (nicknamed Ceca), who had the angry face of a Soviet commissar. She was wearing high black boots, and a pink bra under a black lace top. My mistaking her nickname for Cice (meaning "tits") did nothing to make our meeting smoother.

While I was trying to obtain from Dragana permission to stay in Pale for a few days, Ceca discovered the Muslim origins of a driver hired by another reporter in our convoy, and immediately denounced him as a spy to a uniformed man named Nenad. This triggered a series of phone calls about what to do with us all. In another tiny room, Nenad was also making phone calls and was getting drunker and drunker on slivovitz from a flat bottle that he kept in a pocket in the leg of his pants. I got invited in for a shot, and discovered to my amazement a computer terminal standing on a rickety table, under pinups and anti-Bosnian cartoons. It had some sort of data service that provided daily printouts of Washington *Post* stories about Bosnia.

After three hours of fidgeting (by then, the calls were going to the chief of staff of the Army and to "the president of the Republika Srpska," Radovan Karadžić), we lost patience. It was already six o'clock—almost too late for us to cross from Lukavica to the airfield before nightfall—and, in spite of protests from Dragana and Ceca, we all decided to leave.

Just outside Pale, we were halted at a checkpoint by furious gun-toting Serbs. Screaming and waving their guns, they stormed our three armored cars, grabbed the Muslim driver, and dragged him out to a waiting police car. I suddenly remembered more Serbian words than I thought I'd ever known, and I tried to negotiate, explaining that we had just been accredited, but they only got more wired up. "*Nazad! Nazad!*" they shouted (the word is the same in my native Pol-

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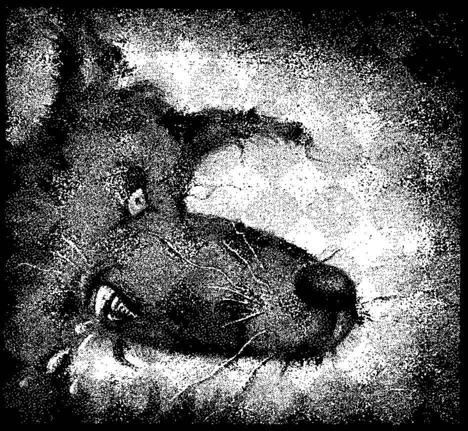
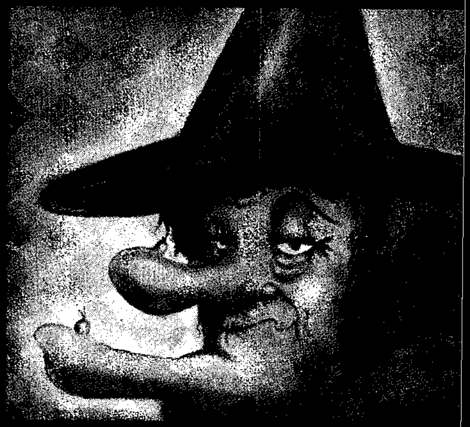
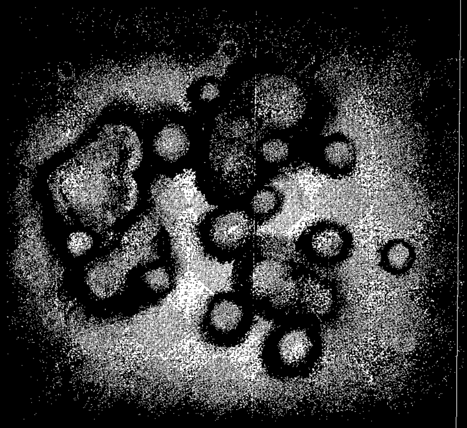


The Big Bad Wolf



The Wicked Witch

The Thing Under the Bed



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ish, and it means "Back!"), and my efforts to mediate made an old man in a blue uniform pull a gun from a white holster under his belly and point it at my back.

He ordered us to follow the police car that was transporting the Muslim driver. A mile from the Olimpik, we were stopped at the side of the road. The old man in the blue uniform disappeared, taking the Muslim driver with him and leaving three armed soldiers to guard us. At first, they were tough and formal, but a few Marlboros and some chitchat about the common origins of Poles and Serbs softened them a little, and pretty soon we were discussing politics.

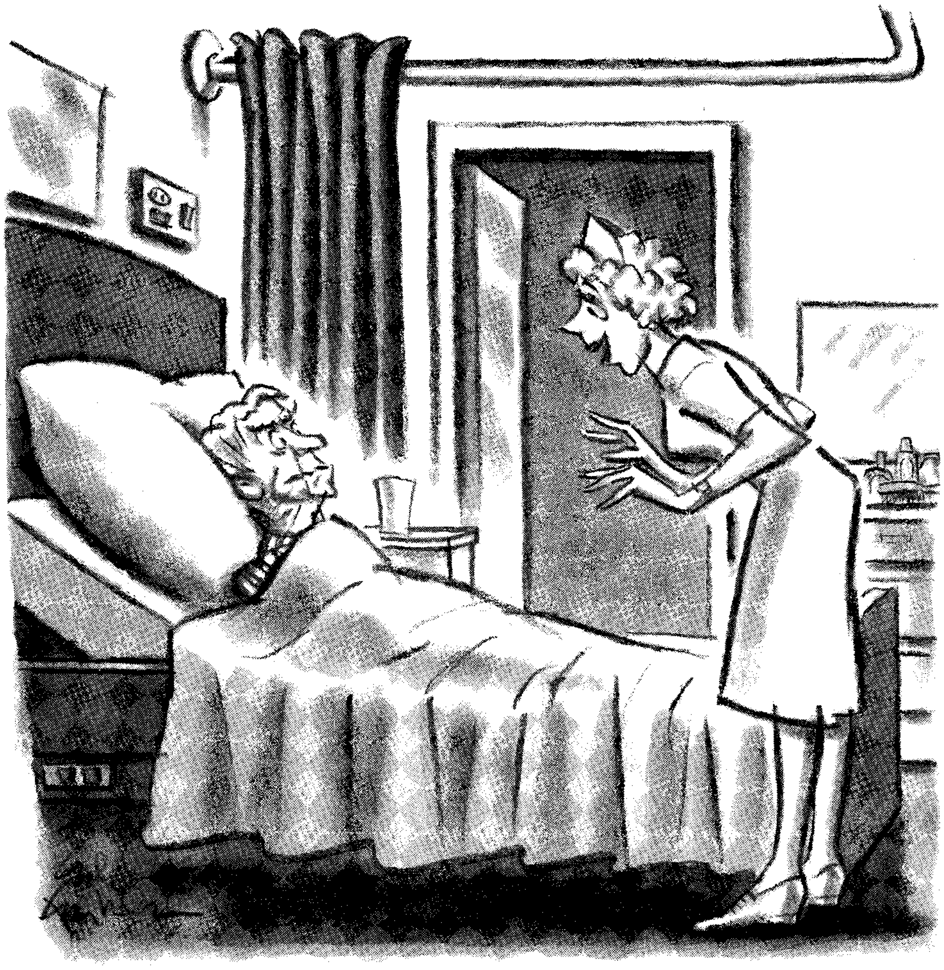
They were absolutely unimpressed by the possibility of air strikes against Serb artillery positions. (This was back when the White House was talking a tough line.) They were sure that Clinton would not do anything, "because he is not a man," and said that if he tried they would shoot down the American planes. Two of the soldiers, both from Sarajevo—Miloš, aged twenty-seven, who had formerly been a TV repairman, and Lazar, a thirty-two-year-old, who had played professional soccer before the war—thought that the whole world was unjust to the Serbs, and that the Muslims got support from America, from France, from the Vatican, and from the Jews. The third soldier didn't want to talk. But he obviously wanted to drink, so he stopped a passing bus, boarded it, and came back with a bottle of moonshine slivovitz and offered us sips.

We listened to the BBC, and I translated the headlines for Lazar and Miloš. They laughed off every piece of information about the situation in Bosnia, even an account of the shelling of Sarajevo, as enemy propaganda. Miloš had heard on Pale Radio that the Muslims were beating and killing the Serbs in Sarajevo (when I denied it, he looked at me patronizingly), so he was worried about his father, who had remained in the town. When I suggested that his father might die instead from the shells that his colleagues were firing, he said that this was too bad, but, "as President Karadžić said, Serbs, Croats, and Muslims should not be forced to live together like cats and dogs." I think he was about to give me his father's address, but just then the police car returned, bringing back the Muslim driver, and we were escorted all the way to Lukavica.

When we reached the barracks, Branko warned us that the airfield was very dangerous that night. This was hardly news: the sound of mortar fire was almost uninterrupted, and dashing across the field would have been suicidal. Branko invited us to sleep in the barracks, and around midnight we were led into a big room where bunks had been prepared for us. "If you need something, just ask this man," he said, pointing to a soldier with a gun who had positioned himself outside the door: half butler, half sentry.

OUR next attempt to talk to the Serbs of the Republika Srpska, two days later, ended in another virtual detention, but this, too, was instructive. Armed with our freshly issued accreditations, and encouraged by Karadžić's signing of the Vance-Owen peace plan (obviously the result of the sabre-rattling in Washington), John Pomfret and I opened the map and decided that the town of Rogatica, eighty kilometres east of Sarajevo, would be just the place for a case study of the plan's feasibility. (We also toyed with the idea of sneaking from there to Žepa or to Goražde—besieged Muslim enclaves that no journalists had been allowed to enter.)

Before the war, Rogatica had a population of twenty-two thousand—sixty per cent Muslim, most of the rest Serbs. Now it was under Serb control ("ethnically clean," a soldier in civilian clothes who asked for a ride along the way told us proudly), but the Vance-Owen plan dividing Bosnia and Herzegovina into ten provinces allotted it to the Muslims. As we later saw for ourselves, the cleansing there had been thorough and had obviously been accomplished by force: all the shops along the main street had shattered windows, the merchandise was gone, and many houses had been burned or otherwise destroyed. Last August, there were wire reports that Muslim women had been gang-raped in Rogatica. Now only a few



"Congratulations, Mr. Grimshaw. You've been digitally enhanced from a mean old bastard to a delightful old codger."

dozen Muslim families remained in town.

No wonder foreign journalists were not welcome. It took a lot of explanations, Marlboros, and Slav-bonding at the checkpoint for us to get into the town. Finally, we were escorted by a police car to the Rogatica office of internal security. (In totalitarian regimes—and the Republika Srpska certainly is one—the word "security" always sends a shiver of insecurity down my spine.) In an office upstairs, a young man in a uniform asked why we had come. We said we wanted to wander around the town and speak with the citizens about the Vance-Owen plan. He muttered something into a walkie-talkie, then announced that "wandering around the town and speaking with the citizens about the Vance-Owen plan" was forbidden. Even with our accreditations? Sorry, he said, Commander Kusić decides here. "Commander of what?" "Commander here!" And so we spent the next four hours in the security office drinking coffee and emptying a bottle of brandy called Viniak with a motley group of the town's citizens: a local teacher, a former I.B.M. computer repairman from Sarajevo who was now a journalist, an ex-drummer, a woman working for the information bureau of the defense ministry (I am sure she made up that title on the spur of the moment), and a few men wearing police and military uniforms.

All of them seemed to be perfectly normal—as normal as they come on the Serb side. Some were primitive, even crass; others (like the teacher, who volunteered Latin when my Serbian was deficient) were more educated. The woman spoke a few words of English (and blushed after each one of them). They were all hospitable, and a couple even had a sense of humor. But when the question of multinational cohabitation was raised they suddenly showed acute signs of paranoia.

Mladen Vasiljević, the chief of the Serb military police in Rogatica, was absolutely positive that the Bosnian government in Sarajevo was an outpost of the Islamic world and was waging a jihad against the non-Muslim population. He pooh-poohed as propaganda my examples of peaceful coexistence in Sarajevo between people of different nationalities. And for the benefit of John he quipped, "You know what Vance and

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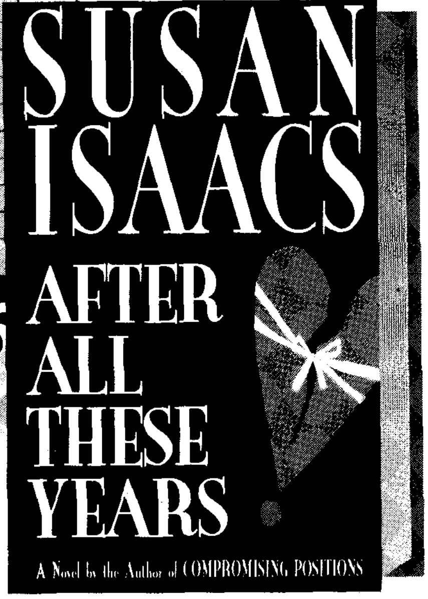

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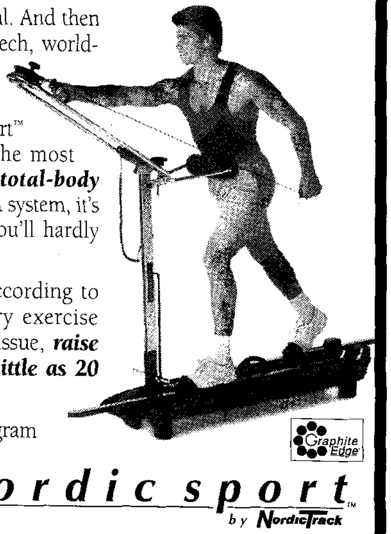


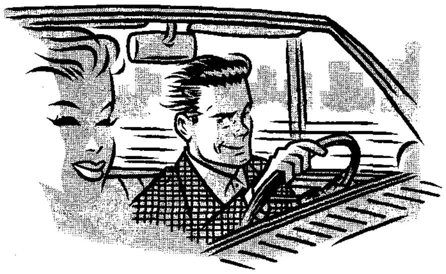
Owen would do if they were sent to America? They would scrap the fifty states and establish five hundred and twenty instead." According to him, the Bosnian capital is not besieged but, rather, is *besieging* the Serb forces around it. Although Rogatica—and seventy per cent of Bosnia-Herzegovina—was now firmly in Serbian hands, he saw his nation as the eternal victim. "We are heavenly people," he said, "because more of us are in heaven than on earth." And in no time he was spinning into a history lecture that started with Kosovo Polje. Thank God the Serbs, the last bastion of civilization, were here, because otherwise Europe would have been flooded by the forces of Islam.

Goran Mandić, the computer repairman turned journalist, grabbed a piece of paper and drew a sketchy map: Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and the other Islamic countries on the right, and on the far left Bosnia, represented as a wedge pushing westward. And if we wanted to know how ancient the Serb civilization was Vasiljević recommended we look in history books to see who introduced the knife and fork to Europe. "We! The Serbs!" He was friendly but tough: drinking and talking with him was permitted, but taking notes was forbidden, because how could he be sure that we would write the truth? The "write the truth" line is a recurrent tune here: all Serbs feel that the international media are against them, that they are innocent victims of a world conspiracy.

When the rest of our hosts left the room for a moment to consult about what to do with us, Goran quickly whispered that he would like to speak with us later. But then Vasiljević came back and announced that the Commander did not want us to stay in Rogatica. We were escorted to the checkpoint and asked to leave. (On the way back, we met Larry Hollingworth, from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. He told us that on the previous day Kusić had refused to let him travel to Žepa, calling him a "secret Muslim" and a "carrier of codes" for the Sarajevo government. Larry had been forced out of Rogatica at gunpoint.)

On our next visit to town, a few days later, Goran invited us to spend the night. We met his wife, Nada, his mother-in-law, and his two sons, Boris and Stefan. (The boys were playing on the porch with a huge artillery shell case when we arrived.) Nada insisted on cooking dinner for us. We had brought a few rolls from the Holiday Inn and some cans of food from the French Army commissary at the Sarajevo airport, but Goran and Nada showed less interest in the pâté than in the stale rolls: these were baked in their beloved town, from which they had escaped a year ago, leaving behind their friends, their apartment, their car, and almost all their belongings.

They were probably the most dissident of all the Serbs we met, because they expressed no hatred of the Muslims, only fear: Goran was convinced that if he were now in Sarajevo his two little sons would be killed, simply because they were Serbs, and Nada asked whether it was true that Serbs who remained in the capital were kept in cellars by the Muslims, because she had heard this on TV. What was most stunning, however, was their ignorance of the current situation in their home town: they didn't know that the trams had not been running in Sarajevo for the past year; they had never heard of the massacres in breadlines and in the markets. They had never seen the photographs of skinny men behind the barbed wire of Serb camps, either. Nada showed us the family photograph album, explaining where they used to live, and she and her husband had tears in their eyes when we described to them the daily death toll, the makeshift cemeteries in parks and squares, the constant shelling of Koševo Hospital, which was near their former apartment. It became clear that there had been a near-total information blockade in this Republika Srpska. The only television stations that people here have been watching for the past year were broadcasting from Belgrade and Pale, both of which supplied a fierce anti-Muslim line of propaganda. This was probably the only place in the world where the carnage wrought by Serb regulars and irregulars on civilian Muslims, which we witnessed daily in Sarajevo, was not on the evening news.



WHEN the Bosnian Serb Parliament rejected the Vance-Owen plan and decided to hold a referendum on it, John and I went back to Rogatica once more, to observe the voting. At the by now familiar checkpoint, we were directed to the municipal council, and we found ourselves watching the same crazy play but with different actors: again we enjoyed the hospitality of Rogatica's Serbs, and again it was wrapped in pro-Serb and anti-Muslim rhetoric. "Serbs are an old nation in a new territory," we were told, and "sociologists can prove that the Muslims from here are in fact Serbs." Kosovo Polje and the knife and fork were cited, too. Nodding and obediently taking notes so as not to arouse their suspicions, we asked to see a few polling stations. There were no objections.

The director of Rogatica's automobile-parts factory, Milorad Janković, who is known as Mića, was the president of the referendum commission in Rogatica. He generously offered to go with us for a tour, ordered a couple of sandwiches, and grabbed his pistol, and we hit the road. During the next seven hours, we visited three polling stations. Everywhere we were warmly welcomed, and everywhere we heard the same thing: the Vance-Owen plan would be rejected, because it meant Muslim occupation of Serb land. As for the referendum's fairness, it was comparable to that of all the elections I saw in my youth. (I should add that I grew up in a totalitarian Communist state.)

When we returned to Rogatica, Mića invited us into the municipal-council office for coffee and a drink. There was a new group of people there, all friendly and all wanting to tell us about the murderous plans of the Sarajevo government, and the dangers of Islam in general. Just as they were zooming in on the knife-and-fork bit, in came a short man with jagged teeth, wearing a sort of khaki McDonald's cap with gold trim. He was accompanied by two bodyguards: one was plain-looking; the other made me think of a forest-grown hippie—abundant beard, long hair with a topknot held by a blue ribbon, an earring, and, hanging from his belt, a knife and two gun holsters with folk-like fringes. More drinks were served.

"Now you have a chance to ask the Commander some questions," said Mića.

"Commander who?" I asked, suspecting that the short man was Rajko Kusić.

"It doesn't matter," Kusić said. (It *was* Kusić; Mića later confirmed my guess.) "All you have to know is that I am the boss here."

I immediately asked him for a permit to go to Žepa.

"Why to Žepa?" he asked. "Everything is quiet there—no need for journalists to go." (In Sarajevo, the reports about Serb shelling of Muslim-held Žepa were apocalyptic, but it later turned out that the death toll had been exaggerated.)

"Exactly," I said. "We want to go and see and then write the truth."

No. Kusić thought that this was too dangerous, and proposed jokingly that if I was so courageous I should come and work for him. I giggled politely.

He was in a good mood. He showed his jagged teeth in a grimace and changed the subject: "Drink some more wine, darling. It increases your appetite for sex," he said, which reminded me of the gang-rape reports.

Then Kusić left, telling us to go and ask for a permit for Žepa from President Karadžić or the commander of the Republika Srpska's Army, General Ratko Mladić.

We did. We got General Mladić's agreement by combining tricks of the trade with sheer luck; and a few days later—just as the United Nations declared Žepa a safe zone—we were back on the road. We went smoothly through all the checkpoints, up to the Rogatica city limits. There we got stopped for an hour. Then Rajko Kusić arrived, with his two guards. I showed him our permit. He looked at it and barked, "*Nazad.*"

Kusić was friendly this time: he did not shoot us, did not detain us, did not pull out his gun, and did not make any sleazy remarks to me. He simply told us to get the hell out of there.

We did. We went straight back to Sarajevo, which was under particularly heavy shelling that day. (Sarajevo Radio reported twenty killed and over a hundred and twenty wounded.) Going back and forth across the front lines is always a giddy exercise, but as soon as we arrived in town I felt a certain relief—a distinct feeling of having moved from the psychiatric ward back into the emergency room. ♦

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PROFILE

THE WHISTLE-BLOWER—PART II

Common sense dictated that David Durk should have left the N.Y.P.D. after he became famous as the cop who engineered the Knapp Commission's investigation into police corruption. But unlike his co-witness Frank Serpico, Durk was determined to stay in law enforcement, though he was dogged by his reputation as a man on a moral crusade.

BY JAMES LARDNER

THE corruption scandal of the early nineteen-seventies was a major seismic event in the New York City Police Department. A police commissioner, Howard Leary, resigned. His successor, Patrick V. Murphy—one eye turned toward the Knapp Commission and its corruption hearings—proceeded to boot out virtually all the top commanders he had inherited, in some cases reaching several rungs down into the ranks for their replacements. The department began using espionage and undercover tactics to go after cops who were on the take, and corruption subsided dramatically, becoming something like what police officials had always—falsely—claimed it to be: a matter of bad apples, or clusters of them. But all this did not translate into affection for Sergeant David Durk, who had forced the issue on the department in the first place.

The new team at headquarters was much like the old team in its attitude toward cops who passed unofficial secrets to outside agencies. Durk had worked intensively with David Burnham, a reporter for the New York *Times*, on the article that spurred the creation of the Knapp Commission. And his sins went further than that: most of his whistle-blowing had been against people whose culpability lay in their having received information about corruption and having sat on it. This was an innovation in whistle-blowing, and it caused widespread alarm. It was an assault not only on the particular people Durk had named but, implicitly, on the entire leadership of the city's criminal-justice system, since that leadership had placidly coexisted with the problem for years. As in postwar Europe, there was a desire to forget—to assume that everybody had been part of the Resistance. Durk was someone who had the bad taste, now and then, to point out the truth. "When did *you* get religion?" he would say to a boss who suddenly became righteous about rank-and-file misdeeds, and even when he held his tongue people would look at him and be reminded of some disagreeable piece of history. He was "a walking indictment" of the bosses, Harold Hess, a retired chief, has observed.

Durk had told the *Times* and the Knapp Commission not only about what certain highly placed officials had done or failed to do but about what they had said in self-justification. "He created the impression—perhaps unintended—that he would take a shard of a remark made five years ago and throw it back in your face," a former prosecutor recalls. "This was very unwise."

"His name struck fear into every boss's heart," says Jack Ferguson, a friend who was a lieutenant in charge of a unit within the Organized Crime Control Bureau's intelligence section at the time, and now serves as chief investigator in the Staten Island District Attorney's office. "When he called, everybody got shook."

And so, in June of 1972, when Commissioner Murphy put out the word that Durk was available to any commander who cared to assume responsibility for him, there was a fairly resounding silence and then considerable astonishment when a newcomer to the top ranks—William McCarthy, the deputy commissioner for Organized Crime Control—stepped forward and said, "If he's free, I want him."

McCarthy was a tall man with a country-club taste in clothes and a gentle manner that concealed a streak of hotheadedness. As the commander of the Traffic Division in the early nineteen-sixties, he had encouraged his men to ticket vehicles without fear or favor. He had been rewarded with a transfer, and had then decided to retire, at the age of forty-seven, to Florida and a life of golf, reading, and teaching criminal justice. He had been drawing a pension for seven years when Commissioner Murphy, having exhausted the active-duty ranks in the course of his head-hunting, invited him back. Alone among the new leaders of the department, McCarthy figured that he owed David Durk and Frank Serpico a debt of gratitude. "This tempest that they had set off had made it possible for me to get back there with the kind of power that I always wanted but never had," he told me shortly before his death, in 1990. "By bringing David in, I was flying a flag. I was saying, 'I'm not like other palefaces—I don't speak with forked tongue.' "

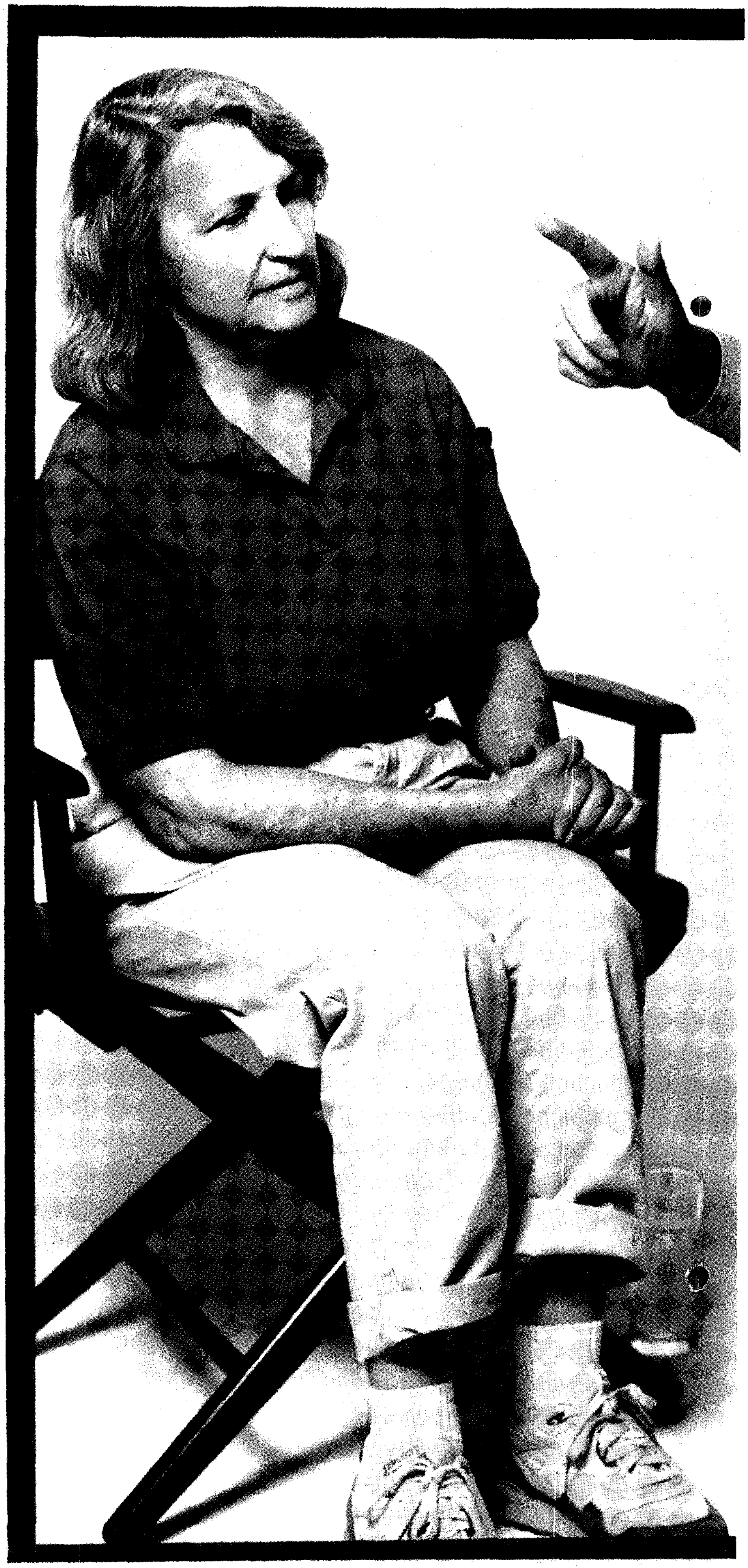
Durk became a one-man detective squad reporting directly to McCarthy. "David lived in a slightly different universe from the average policeman," McCarthy said. "He was not the easiest guy to get along with; he didn't fit into the discipline mode of a quasi-military organization. But he was a hell of a guy at developing information, and he had a lot of good in him, so I decided to let him go at it."

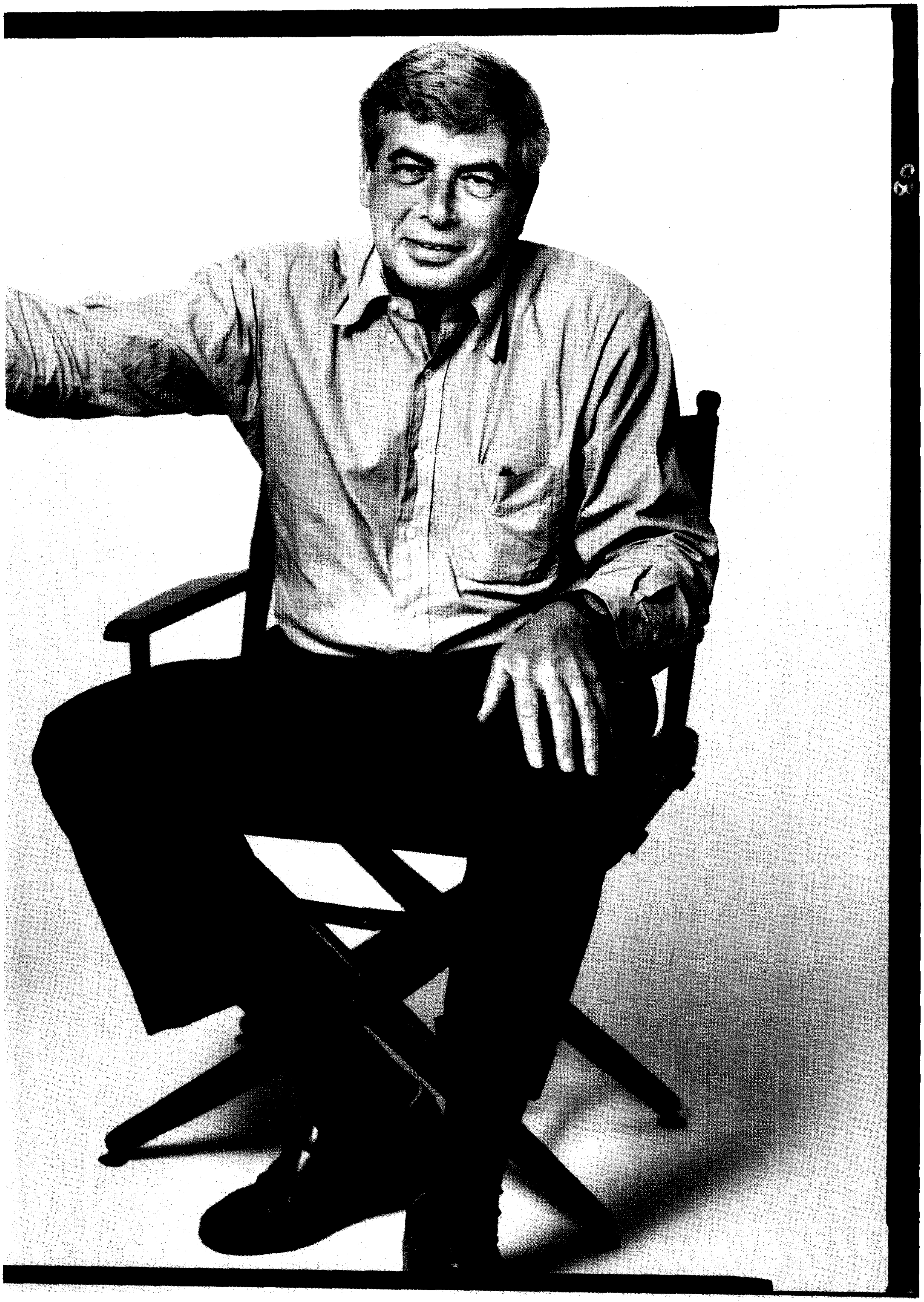
Durk's former superiors had noted a tendency on his part, when he was asked to go after wrongdoing in low places, to find it in high places instead. Now he was working for a boss whose instincts ran the same way. Thus, an investigation that began with an attempt to buy a case of "size-38 dresses"—that is, revolvers—from a man who called himself Bernard the Beast quickly evolved into an attempt to get evidence against crooked prosecutors and investigators in the office of the Queens District Attorney, Thomas Mackell.

The Mackell investigation blew up

in Durk's face that summer of 1972, when his undercover was nabbed, wearing a tape recorder, by Mackell's people, and Mackell himself denounced Durk and the Police Department for playing a game of entrapment. The Manhattan District Attorney, Frank Hogan, whose office had approved the operation, issued a public apology for what Hogan called "an excess of zeal" on everyone's part. But, as McCarthy recalled, when one of Mackell's assistants asked him if he would testify before a grand jury on the matter McCarthy said he would "be there with bells and whistles to explain *why we suspected your office.*" A year later, with Governor Nelson Rockefeller preparing to remove him from office as a result of another corruption investigation, Mackell resigned.

Durk had been commandeering detectives from various units, but the Mackell brouhaha—in which it appeared that a borrowed detective had alerted Mackell's office—persuaded McCarthy that Durk needed a squad of his own. The deputy commissioner gave the new squad a mission dear to his own heart: to investigate Mafia influence in the garment business. The Genovese and Gambino families and their front organizations had long been a law unto themselves in the garment district. The investigative strategy that McCarthy and Durk adopted was to go into the trucking business and wait for organized crime to come calling. Like the attempt to investigate the Queens D.A.'s office, the idea of setting up a sting operation in the garment district was a stretch: nothing of the kind had been done before. But the Justice Department had created interagency organized-crime strike forces all over the country, and the Southern District strike force, which covered Manhattan, had already found an F.B.I. informant, Herman Goldfarb, with excellent mob connections. Goldfarb drove a late-model Cadillac Eldorado and dressed like a character out of "Guys and Dolls": when Durk met him, he was wearing a sharkskin suit that was a couple of sizes too large for him, though he was fairly large himself. In the nineteen-fifties, Goldfarb had made a bundle selling insurance to unions and small businesses in Brooklyn. Then he had been imprisoned (wrongly, he insisted) for a business fraud, and for the better part of a





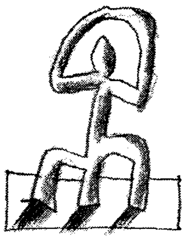
Arlene and David Durk, photographed by Richard Avedon in New York City, June 16, 1993.

decade he had been an F.B.I. informant, having volunteered for that duty so that history and his children would remember him as a patriot who had served his country rather than as a master of financial scams. He had, by his own precise reckoning, an I.Q. of 159, and he could recite Tennyson, in a strong Brooklyn accent.

The stated objective of Operation Cleveland, as the enterprise was named, was to gather evidence against a truckers' group called the Master Truckmen of America, against the local truckers' union, and against one Matthew (Matty the Horse) Ianniello—all of whom had to be paid off by anyone trying to run a trucking business in the garment district. In less than a year, that goal had been achieved, and the operation was reaching into other realms of blue- and white-collar crime. Through Ianniello, Goldfarb arranged a meeting with Anthony (Tony Pro) Provenzano, a prominent local Teamsters Union official, who went on to become the law-enforcement community's favorite suspect in the murder of Jimmy Hoffa. Goldfarb and Provenzano negotiated a deal to have two million three hundred thousand dollars in union pension funds invested in a mortgage on a midtown hotel, with Provenzano taking a thirteen-per-cent kickback. A federal jury found Provenzano guilty in the scheme, and he was sentenced to a four-year term. (In a separate case, he received a life sentence for murder, and he died in prison.)

Goldfarb was an undercover genius. A big talker himself, he had a remarkable ability to get people—mobsters, union bosses, fellow-truckers—to spell out their criminal intentions, and he was a magnet for gossip. In Durk's mind, the great disappointment of the Knapp Commission's inquiry had been the failure to look at corruption involving lawyers, prosecutors, judges, and, in short, anyone but cops. The daily summaries of Goldfarb's conversations glistened with nuggets of intelligence about various public officials who were said to be under organized crime's influence, to have taken bribes, or to be disposed toward doing so. Durk began to see Goldfarb as a vehicle for a wide-ranging investigation of, as Durk liked to call it, "the nexus between organized crime and political corruption."

This was a reverie, however, in which some key people did not join. The effective leaders of the strike force were two federal prosecutors, Edward (Mike) Shaw and William Aronwald, who regarded Goldfarb's leads as tantalizing but speculative. The possibility of nailing a judge here or a politician there, they argued, had to be balanced against the possibility of failure, the high expense of maintaining the operation, and the problem of security. Shaw and Aronwald were particularly troubled on this last count (they said later) after the arrest for bribery, in March of 1974, of a detective who had been working as Goldfarb's supposed partner. The strike-force prosecutors managed to keep the detective's picture out of the newspapers—and Goldfarb gave out a cover story to explain his partner's sudden departure—but they continued to worry that someone might make the connection, or that the detective himself might spill the beans, even though the charge against him was dropped in a matter of weeks. By the late summer, Shaw and Aronwald had concluded that it was time to bring the undercover phase of Operation Cleveland to an end, to present the cases that had already been made to a grand jury, and to move Goldfarb into the federal witness-relocation program, which had always been his eventual destination.



Durk regarded Goldfarb and his leads as a treasure far too valuable to be given up for the comparatively short list of indictments that the strike force was in a position to obtain. Durk had personally recruited a replacement for the arrested detective—a policewoman who had been installed as Goldfarb's "secretary." He didn't believe that Goldfarb's security was in any fresh danger, and neither did Goldfarb. Durk read the situation as another example of a phenomenon that had long vexed him: the insistence of prosecutors, when a case involved high-powered suspects, on seeing very strong evidence (or, as his longtime friend Robert Levinson, of the F.B.I., put it to him, a "conviction kit") up front. Durk theorized that the strike-force attorneys were also devaluing some of Goldfarb's information because it involved activities that were taking place in Brooklyn rather than in Manhattan, and, as such, might have to be turned over to a rival strike force based in the Eastern District. With Goldfarb, who was equally determined to go forward, Durk drew up a list of weighty cases and suspects they still hoped to pursue, and launched a campaign to get the decision reversed.

William McCarthy, who sympathized with Durk's frustration, would have been a valuable ally, but McCarthy had by now gone into a second retirement. His departure had been one of the minor aftershocks of another big shift in the city's political landscape: the passing of the reins of the mayoralty from John V. Lindsay to Abraham Beame, in January, 1974. Beame, a machine Democrat, had turned over the management of the Police Department to one of the few traditionalists who had survived the Murphy years, Chief Inspector Michael J. Codd. Some thought that Codd, tall and imposing in his uniform, provided instant reassurance to cops of the old school, and his performance lived up to the promise of his appearance. "Never a no. Never a yes. Just an endless round of maybes and perhapses" was how one borough commander summed up Codd's treatment of unorthodox ideas. In McCarthy's place, Codd had named James Taylor, who did not share McCarthy's passion for high-level investigations, and to Durk's immense frustration he had acquiesced in the phaseout of Operation Cleveland.

People who are not fond of Durk—and in the higher ranks of New York City law enforcement they constitute a majority—like to make it clear that they have nothing against whistle-blowers or whistle-blowing in general; indeed, many of them express admiration for the courage that Durk showed in his campaign against police corruption. What has bothered them since the days of the Knapp Commission, however, is that, as one ex-prosecutor sees it, "he was fundamentally suspicious of people and determined to make something wicked out of any difference of opinion." Durk's critics would prefer a whistle-blower who, if he disagrees with a policy decision by his superiors, will nonetheless graciously accept the outcome, recognizing that reasonable—and honest—public officials can come down on opposite sides of a question. In short, they want Durk to learn some manners.

The notion of the polite whistle-blower is an appealing one. But in the nineteen-sixties, when Durk launched his campaign against police corruption in New York City, there were no whistle-blowers of that sort; the polite people who came across the problem went right on being polite, and said nothing. Durk was a quarrelsome person before he had witnessed any corruption, and his temperament did not undergo a transformation afterward.

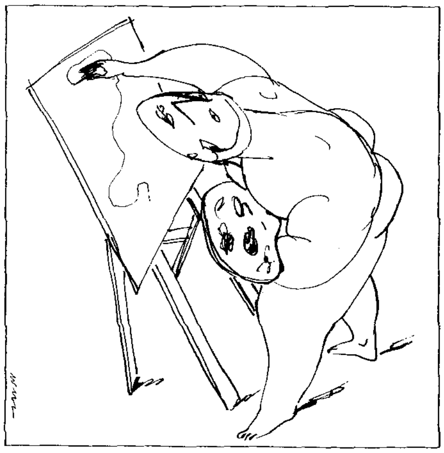
The situation that Durk faced at the end of 1974 was not conducive to blowing the whistle again. His grievance involved a couple of law-enforcement officials who did not share his determination to pursue some allegations that might or might not ever be proved. Had he paused to examine the battle conditions, he might have seen the advisability of yielding, and surviving to fight another day. But he did not pause. A grand farewell dinner for Goldfarb was scheduled on the eve of his and his family's entry into the federal witness-protection program. To this dinner Durk invited the members of Durk's squad, who had become Goldfarb's daily intimates and were serving as Goldfarb's bodyguards that night, and representatives of NBC News, the *Village Voice*, and the *News*. Durk's idea was to let them hear Goldfarb's side of things, so that when the feds officially announced the first set of indictments, patting themselves on the back for a triumphant investigation, the press would be in a position to raise questions about the operation and its unfulfilled potential.

One of the reporters—Jack Newfield, then of the *Voice*—took an immediate interest in a story he heard at the dinner. It concerned a Brooklyn trucker, convicted of tax evasion, who in casual conversation with Goldfarb had boasted that he wasn't worried about going to prison, because his lawyer had an "in" with the judge. The lawyer and the judge were buddies, he had explained, and everything was arranged: if the trucker would buy the judge a racehorse, he would get off with a modest sentence. The trucker had told this part of the story to Goldfarb in a tone of annoyance—he didn't mind paying the cash, but why a racehorse? "Let him pick his own racehorse."

The racehorse story was one of a number of leads that, Durk and Goldfarb both believed, had been neglected out of petty jurisdictional rivalry. Shaw later said that he had apprised his Eastern District counterpart of the allegation, and that they had agreed—in the interest of protecting Goldfarb's cover—not to take any immediate action, except to monitor the trucker's sentencing. It seemed to Durk, however, that the charge was one that had to be investigated immediately, or the opportunity would be lost.

Newfield, as it happened, knew the chief judge in the Eastern District, Jacob Mishler. Durk thought that Mishler might want to know—and deserved to know—that an accusation had been made against one of his judges, and that Newfield could get the information to him. The next morning, Newfield appeared in Durk's office (Durk was out at the time), and persuaded a sergeant who had attended the Goldfarb dinner to give him a copy of some police reports detailing the racehorse allegation.

The dinner and the Durk-Newfield connection came out when, not long afterward, the racehorse story and the larger dispute over the decision to halt Operation Cleveland erupted into the news. Goldfarb, who was angry about his relocation arrangements—his son, for instance, had trouble getting into a school, because he hadn't been provided with proper records—had taken his complaint to a Senate committee, and it had become public. That Durk had not directly caused the disclosure was a fine point that people tended to lose sight of in the Sturm und Drang that followed. Durk had, after all, confided in representatives of the press, one of them had obtained copies of confidential reports, and now the whole story was out. Durk could not effectively defend himself, he says, because he didn't want to take the easy course of blaming the sergeant who had, unthinkingly, turned the reports over to Newfield.

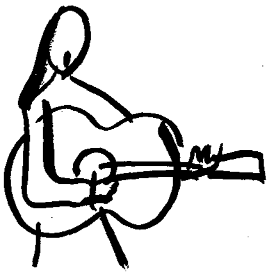


What Durk's superiors saw was an ugly, headline-grabbing squabble between Goldfarb—an informant—and the United States Attorney's office, with Durk supporting the informant. In one newspaper article Aronwald was quoted as saying of Goldfarb, "He is a witness for us. And he doesn't make decisions, although he thinks he is Dick Tracy." To which Goldfarb shot back, "At least Dick Tracy made cases, which is more than I can say for Aronwald." In another article, Durk accused Aronwald of "doing nothing" about the racehorse case, and Aronwald called Durk "a cancer on all law enforcement."

Aronwald, who had just succeeded Shaw as chief of the strike force, was a prosecutor who prided himself on his toughness (he had once coldcocked a defense lawyer in open court), and he and Durk had a lively mutual dislike. When Aronwald got wind of the Newfield business, he instinctively assumed that Durk had given Newfield the reports, and began taking steps to have Durk indicted—a plan that ran aground only when it emerged that the documents in question were police rather than F.B.I. reports, and thus were not a federal matter.

In a fury, Aronwald demanded that the department suspend Durk for breaching the security of the operation and putting court cases in jeopardy. Taylor, according to one of his aides (Taylor himself does not recall this episode), was inclined to think that Aronwald was overstating things, out of personal enmity, and it appeared that Durk might escape punishment. But Aronwald refused to let the matter rest. He went to Police Commissioner Codd, and, speaking in the name of the Justice Department, pressed him to relieve Durk of his command and have him brought up on charges. "I made it very clear to Codd," Aronwald said recently, "that the Justice Department would have no further dealings with the N.Y.P.D. in any investigative undertaking that David Durk was in any way connected to—that I could not trust David Durk, and I would not ask the people working with me to trust him." For his part, Judge Mishler called Taylor to offer a statement of support for Durk, saying that he had performed a service for the court.

When the top brass took up the Durk question, some leaned toward a transfer to Coney Island. (Commissioner Codd was a devotee of the old practice of sending errant cops to commands as far away as possible from where they lived—and Durk lived on West Seventieth Street, in Manhattan.) However, it was important not to make it obvious to the world that Durk had been "harpooned," another participant in the discussions explained later. In the end, the decision was made to send him to Queens, as the administrative lieutenant in charge of keeping records for the Queens detectives. In his new assignment, Durk would be placed under the close supervision of Deputy Chief Edwin Dreher, who was renowned for his no-nonsense ways. Aronwald was pleased to learn of the outcome, because he knew that Dreher was the sort of commander who, if Durk took the smallest step out of line, "would squash him like a bug." All this, however, was explained to the public—by First Deputy Commissioner Taylor—as a routine transfer. When a reporter asked Taylor why he had given Durk such a job, Taylor praised Durk for his "unique qualities" as an investigator and added that, regrettably, the department did not at that moment have an investigation worthy of his talents.



IN the summer and fall of 1975, when Mayor Beame was imposing a harsh program of layoffs and budget cuts that had been developed to save New York from bankruptcy, Durk—anchored to a desk at a station house in Forest Hills—was a mirror of the city's pain. He had turned forty, the age at which people begin to suspect that the future is now. One of his assignments was to assemble a list of police phone lines that could be disconnected to save money. Another was to draft a memo instructing detectives throughout the borough to use both sides of a piece of paper. Durk himself made a small contribution to the city's financial-rescue plan: the commander's pay he had been receiving in his previous job was taken away from him. He had always been argumentative by nature, but his contrariness had been leavened by a playful optimism and a faith in his own indestructibility. Now those other qualities were no longer so much in evidence, and something akin to bitterness was taking hold.

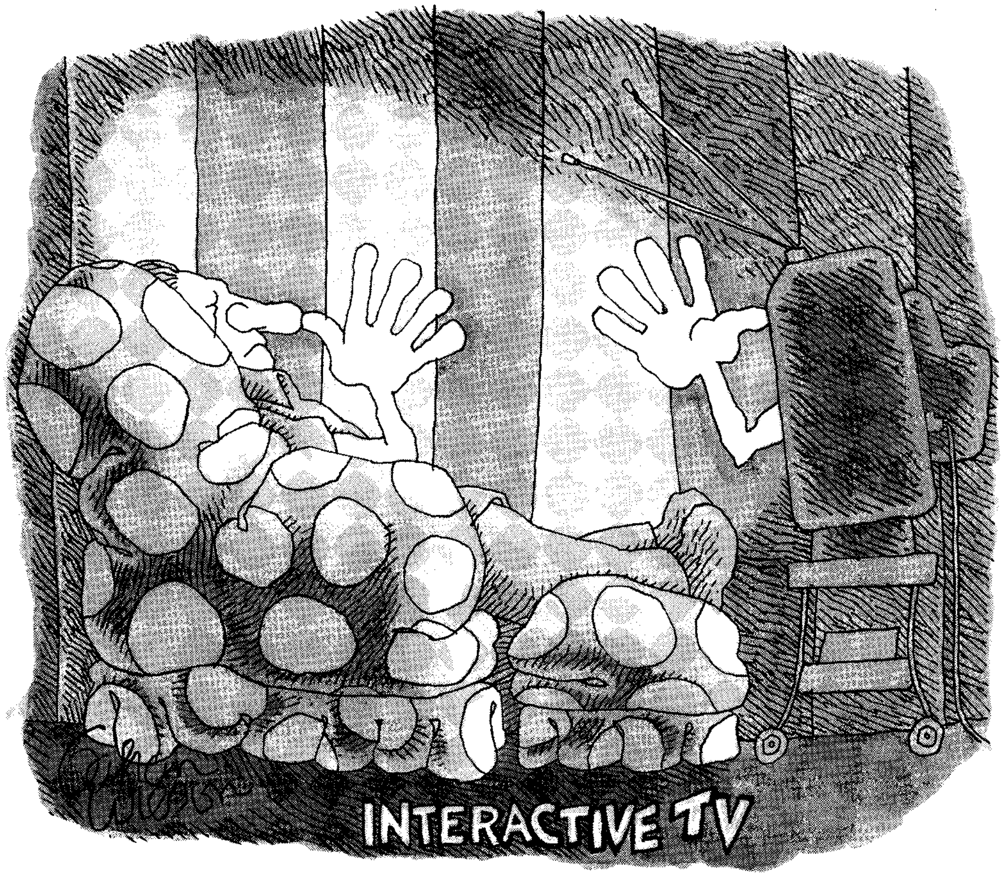
The Knapp Commission scandal had been good for a lot of people. Whitman Knapp, its chairman, had been made a federal judge. Michael Armstrong, its chief counsel, was beginning to establish a reputation as a shrewd and aggressive defender of public officials facing corruption charges. Nicholas Scoppetta, another Knapp Commission lawyer, went on to a job with the United States Attorney's office and was subsequently made a deputy mayor under Beame. Frank Serpico shared in the considerable profits from the book and the movie that bore his name. For Durk, there had been awards, speaking engagements, and consulting offers from police departments around the country, and he had begun teaching what became a popular course at Yale, "The Police and Social Change." But, of all the people who had played a positive part in the Knapp Commission story, only he—widely regarded as the person who had set the whole chain of events into motion—had failed to derive any lasting material or professional benefit. One of the many things he had disliked about the movie "Serpico" was the suggestion that a police officer who fought corruption ran the risk of losing his life, and in any case had no future in law enforcement. Now his own career seemed to bear out the second half of the thesis.

Even in the pages of the *Times*, it was plain that Durk's moment had passed. Following the demise of the garment-center investigation and the dismantling of Durk's squad, a *Times* editorial called on the department to find Durk "a new assignment that will permit full scope for his investigative talents," but the news pages treated the controversy as a murky affair, and there was a column of news analysis questioning Durk's role as a "source" who had tried to control "the gathering and presentation of the story." Durk felt that the *Times* had sent a signal to Police Headquarters. "As long as the winds from West Forty-third Street were blowing at my back, no one would dream of touching me," he says.

What hurt Durk the most was the feeling that other cops were looking at him and drawing harsh conclusions. To some, of course, he was a satisfying example of a rat who had been put in his place. To others, he was merely a living reminder of what, it seemed to him, remained the first rule of survival in the N.Y.P.D.: *Stay off the radar screen.*

After seven months in Queens, Durk managed to secure a temporary assignment to the United Nations, where he helped draft an international code of ethics for law-enforcement officials. (The code was endorsed by Amnesty International but was not adopted by the General Assembly.) The following year, Durk was assigned to the Safe, Loft, and Truck Squad as the commander of an anti-hijacking unit that operated out of the 72nd Precinct, near the South Brooklyn waterfront. There he and a team of five detectives had to make an office in a hallway adjacent to the ladies' room, and their equipment consisted of a desk, four chairs, and one aging typewriter. Detective Jimmy Lanzano, who was a member of the squad at the time, got precise instructions about how to handle Durk. "Basically, my job was to keep Durk away from headquarters," he recalls.

Durk and Lanzano were instructed not to make any arrests themselves but simply to interview the victims of hijackings that came to light on their shift—four to twelve—and turn over their reports to the day shift for investigation. But Durk was not content to be a report-taker, and neither was Lanzano. Within weeks, they had investi-



gated the theft of twenty-five thousand dollars from an armored car in the Bronx and arrested the chief suspect.

Durk's participation in closing the case—an achievement reported on one of the local radio-news shows the morning he made the arrest—was plainly not what the Safe and Loft commanders had had in mind. That day, the Durk-Lanzano partnership was terminated; Durk was sent back to Brooklyn and told to concentrate on administrating rather than investigating.

"My biggest mistake was not getting out of the department after Knapp," Durk once said to me. His reasons for remaining had been clear enough at the time. He did not want his fellow-cops to remember him as someone who had enhanced his reputation by tarring theirs. "The dilettante charge would have stuck," he says. Besides, he had thought of the corruption scandal as the triggering event of a full-blown police revolution—one he had hoped to be part of. In the early seventies, the police and their problems had been much on the minds of politicians, academics, and foundation executives, and Durk had had a hard time keeping up with his phone calls. Now the subject was no longer so much in vogue. Nor was he.

In the summer of 1977, the politics of New York City took an unexpected turn, as Representative Edward Koch, a long-shot candidate for mayor, moved to the head of the field. A few years earlier, Durk and his wife, Arlene, had been part of a small circle of New Yorkers, most of them journalists, lawyers, or public servants, who occasionally dined with Koch. Then identified as a liberal—worse, as a Greenwich Village liberal—Koch was amused as well as outraged by Durk's stories of shady dealings in the criminal-justice world, and he picked Durk's brain for ideas about the police and law enforcement, especially during a quickly aborted campaign for the mayoralty in 1973. Koch even went as far as to suggest (it was never clear to Durk how seriously) a small favor that Durk could do for him: take him along on a sort of informal street patrol, find an incipient mugging, and arrange for him to play a heroic part in apprehending the mugger. After Durk's transfer to Queens, Koch complained publicly that Durk was "not being given a chance to use his exceptional talents," and that "instead of pushing pencils, he should be out collaring criminals."

In 1977, Koch ran in earnest, and he captured the mood of the city at a particularly ornery moment in its history. Many of his TV and radio commercials included, as a kind of footnote, variations of the almost subliminal message "Ed Koch is the only politician trusted by Lieutenant David Durk." Durk had said as much; on the other hand, he had not been consulted about the use of his name in Koch's campaign. He learned of it when a police superior summoned him to a tête-à-tête, played a tape of one of the offending commercials, and reminded Durk of a rule barring cops from taking an active part in elective politics. When the dressing-down session was over, Durk called Koch's media adviser, David Garth, who was an old friend. "Why didn't you tell me you were going to do this?" Durk asked.

"We didn't tell you because we wanted to protect you," Garth replied.

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As Mayor-elect, Koch made a surprising choice for police commissioner—a lawyer named Robert McGuire, who had served as an assistant United States Attorney in the sixties. McGuire had acted, pro bono, as Durk's attorney in some of his dealings prior to the Knapp Commission. With Koch's election and McGuire's appointment, Durk began to think that his long exile might soon be over. On the eve of McGuire's swearing in, he and Durk met for drinks at the Carlyle Hotel, and Durk made his job pitch. Reasoning that McGuire, as an outsider, would need a team of detectives to act as his eyes and ears (such units had existed in the past), Durk volunteered to head it up. He offered to give McGuire "a straight count," whatever McGuire might ask him to investigate. But McGuire had a message of his own to deliver. If, as police commissioner, he intervened in the personnel process to arrange any assignment for Durk, it would smack of favoritism. Since they were friends, McGuire said, it was important that Durk be treated as an ordinary lieutenant.

This concern about appearances—

SIMPLER TIMES
ZIEGLER

atypical in the annals of the N.Y.P.D.—was not McGuire's only motive for withholding assistance. Another was his reluctance, precisely because he was an outsider, to do anything that might mark him as suspect in the eyes of the police bureaucracy. "A very interesting thing happens when you are thrust into a position of authority," McGuire told me years later. "You see things differently. I'm a collegial person in terms of management style. I didn't want people with rough edges. David is not the kind of guy who sits there in a room listening to other people's thoughts and occasionally contributing his own thoughts. He was outside the pale in terms of his relationships. The senior people in the department—I'm talking about honest people—respected David for what he had done. Their attitude was 'This guy enabled me to go to work in the morning and feel respected as a police officer.' But there's a big difference between that feeling and wanting him in your office every day. Their attitude was 'Who needs this guy? He acts like nobody's honest but him.' I figured I had enough problems as it was. I couldn't go in there with his baggage."

Durk wound up running a squad of detectives and plainclothes cops operating out of the 25th Precinct, in East Harlem. The assignment placed him under Inspector F. X. Smith, a hard-bitten boss of the old school. Smith was no happier than Durk about their proximity. The department's organized-crime intelligence people had heard that there was a contract out on Durk's life—an aftereffect of his role in the arrest and imprisonment of scores of East Harlem drug traffickers, several years earlier. Smith, Durk says, seemed fixated on the possibility of his being killed, and told him, "They were crazy to send you here! If you get shot, do you have any idea of the amount of paperwork we'd have to do?" Durk remembers Smith saying, in the course of a long introductory conversation, "This is the Sixth Division. You keep looking for truth and justice. There is no truth here. There is no justice. This is the asshole of the world." One of Durk's detectives, on meeting him, remarked with a snarl that "we used to eat great"—meaning before the Knapp Commission.

Despite this reception, Durk was soon returning home at night full of stories about the cases his squad was working on, and about small victories he had won in motivating his troops. "Wherever you put him, he'll get totally absorbed in the work and be effective—as long as it has something to do with crime," Arlene Durk, a psychiatric social worker, says. One successful innovation of his tenure in the Two-Five was the detective-for-a-day concept: if a uniformed cop developed a lead, he was allowed to work on it with the detectives instead of being forced to surrender it (and the credit) to them. The precinct also became a laboratory for Durk's belief that decoys were often the best answer to a pattern of recurring crimes. The squad's clearance rate, which had been among the department's lowest, quickly became one of the highest. Commissioner McGuire heard reports that Durk was "flourishing" and concluded that the decision to treat him like any other lieutenant had been vindicated. The next step in Durk's career, McGuire assumed, would be the captain's exam.

But Durk was getting a very different message from his immediate boss. Durk recalls that on the night before Thanksgiving, 1978, F. X. Smith cited several cops for taking their meal in an unauthorized area of the station house—the muster room, which had the station's only working TV set. "How can you do something like this?" Durk said. "Do you have any idea what this does to morale?"

Smith smiled wearily. "David, David, David," Durk remembers him saying. "When are you going to understand? I'm evaluated on how many complaints I give out. I'm not evaluated on morale." He added that it was only a matter of time before he caught one of Durk's subordinates in a violation of some rule—"and you understand, David, we may have to give you a complaint for failure to supervise, even if you're off duty."

Hoping to extricate himself, Durk went to see David Garth, who, of all the Mayor's confidants, was the one most sympathetic to him. Garth was distressed about Durk's plight, and he spoke to the Mayor about it. He reminded Koch that he owed a debt to Durk. Koch muttered agreement. Garth reported back to Durk that something would be arranged but warned him to be patient, because "you're very controversial."

About a month later, Durk got a call from Philip Michael, a deputy commissioner in the Department of Investigation. Michael (who is now the city's budget director) barely knew Durk, but in his previous job as the Police Department's trial commissioner—the chief judge of its internal court—he had decided the departmental fates of crooked cops, and he spent enough time with them to know that Durk's name never came out of their mouths without expletives attached. The subject that inspired his call to Durk was cigarette taxes—roughly thirty-three million dollars a year in taxes that ought to have been in the city coffers, and wasn't. The city's Finance Department had a unit of twenty-five investigators assigned to more or less full-time cigarette-tax enforcement—a mission they fulfilled by making regular unannounced inspections of the grocery stores, newsstands, drugstores, bars, tobacco shops, and other businesses where cigarettes were sold (upward of ten thousand retail outlets in the city as a whole). The cigarette squad was, to put it politely, not a very professional unit, and there were rumors that its problems went beyond ineptitude. How would Durk feel about being placed in charge of this ragtag unit, and, while he was at it, of several units devoted to investigating the nonpayment of other taxes?

Koch was offering Durk the job of chief tax investigator for the city. Koch told Michael that Durk had done great things in the past and would be sure to make the most of the opportunity. Koch did not say (but could well have thought) that this was the perfect solution to the Durk problem: removing him from the Police Department altogether, and sending him to a low-profile area of city government where, as yet, he had no enemies. But Koch had one reservation. "David, I have great confidence in you," he said in the course of talks with Durk about his new position. "But I don't want you dealing with anybody from the press."

Asking Durk to give up his right to talk to reporters was like asking another

THE FISH

Tomorrow I look forward to a greater harvest.
—*Charles Darwin, 1832.*

Month after dry month, then suddenly
a brief rain has delivered to the fractured hillsides
a haze of grass. So sparse it might be
a figment of the heart. Yet its path
on the outstretched hand is true—brush and retreat—
like the breaths of a spaniel.

There are buried in the decks of certain ships
melon-size prisms of glass, dangling their apices
to the cabins below. Through
their forked, pyramidic ziggings, daylight
is offered to the mess tables, to the tinware,
the gun-gray curlings of salt tongue.
Not rainbowed at all, the light
approaches the face of each sailor
in segments, like the light in a spine of
train-car windows. Then fuses, of course, when it
marries the retina, its chopped evolution

lost in the stasis of the visible.
We turn homeward soon. I remember
the seam lines of Southern constellations, and the twin
tornadoes of a waterspout: one funnel
of wind reaching down from a cloud,
one funnel of sea reaching upward. They met
with the waist of an hourglass—in perfect reflection,
as we, through the Archer, the Scorpion, the Painter,
call forth from the evening some
celestial repetition of our shared churnings.

We shattered the spout
with shotguns that kicked like the guns of my childhood,
when leaves were a prune-mulch and my sisters
stood at the rim of the orchard.
Katty. Caroline. Susan. Marianne.
In the temperate wind, their dresses and sashes,
the variegated strands of their hair, were
the nothing of woodsmoke. Steam.

I cannot foretell our conclusion.

But once, through a pleatwork of waves,
I watched as a cormorant caught and released
a single fish. Eight times. Trapped and released.
Diving into an absence, the fish
reëntered my vision in segments, arcing
through the pivot of the bird's beak. Magnificent,
I thought, each singular visit, each
chattering half step from the sea.

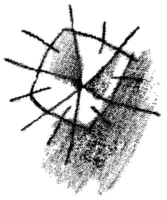
—LINDA BIERDS

cop to give up his revolver. He hemmed and hawed—he tried to make a distinction between "working with the press," as a useful and symbiotic activity, and "leaking," which he promised not to do—but wound up agreeing to a blanket embargo. At the beginning of February, 1979, he became the Finance Department's assistant commissioner for criminal investigation, at an annual salary of thirty-nine thousand three hundred dollars—a raise of eleven thousand six hundred from what the Police Department had been paying him.

One of Durk's first steps was to order an audit of the vaults where contraband cigarettes were held. Before the numbers could be tallied, four of his five supervisors submitted their resignations; a number of investigators also chose to leave, and a few of the others treated him with open hostility. Even in the most beaten-down of bureaucracies, however, there is usually at least one employee who goes about his or her job as if something depended on it. In the cigarette squad, that description fitted Thomas Stanton. Tall and lanky, with shaggy blond hair and a shaggy blond beard—he was sometimes referred to around the office as an "overage hippie"—Stanton was a product of the antiwar movement and the counterculture, layered over a serious Catholic schooling. He loved Frank Capra movies; he drove a Volkswagen Beetle; he put in long hours (though he rarely got paid for more than forty a week); he studied the history—a long, sordid, and occasionally violent one—of cigarette smuggling and tax fraud; and he was used to having his ideas ignored by his superiors.

Although Durk quickly identified Stanton as a potential ally, the feeling was by no means mutual, for Stanton could not abide cops. Nor did he respond well to Durk's talk about "security problems" in the squad—a euphemism for corruption. His attitude toward Durk improved after a night when they drove to the far end of Staten Island together to conduct an interview, stopping at a police precinct for directions. Stanton was taken aback by the effect of Durk's appearance there. The main lobby of the station house was rimmed, high-school-corridor style, by doors with small windows in them, and within minutes of Durk's arrival Stanton saw curious and agitated faces pressing up against the glass, two and three faces to a window. It seemed to him that he had never seen a more nervous bunch of cops. If Durk's mere presence could cause so much discombobulation, Stanton decided, he was probably for real.

The man they were going to see that night was a staff engineer who worked at Pitney Bowes, the manufacturer of the cigarette-tax-stamping machine. Pitney Bowes officials liked to assert that the stamp—a blue- or black-ink impression on the cellophane wrapper of a cigarette pack—was all but impossible to counterfeit. But Stanton, who had a sharp eye for minor irregularities and possible informants, had been finding counterfeit stamps with some frequency, and he had sized up the engineer as someone who, approached away from his office, might be willing to talk candidly. The interview was more fruitful than Stanton had expected. The engineer acknowledged that counterfeiting was common, and that his superiors had consistently covered it up. In the course of a long late-night conversation in his kitchen, he confessed to them he had once, on orders, flooded a stamping machine in order to frustrate a courtroom trial.



Interesting as these disclosures were, Stanton was equally struck by Durk's methods of questioning. Most law-enforcement officers recognized only one category of informant: the no-good one in search of a reward—if not money, then leniency. Durk didn't like the term "informant"—he preferred the more respectful "source"—and his style of questioning owed as much to psychiatry as it did to law enforcement. Stanton was impressed with Durk's sense of when to press a point and when to back off, and with the value of what seemed to be pointless digressions that allowed him to circle back to a sensitive question from an unthreatening angle. "The most important talent a detective can have is to direct the conversation," Stanton says. "Durk is brilliant at this. He has this knack for never letting the conversation reach a dead end—for keeping it going until people tell him what he wants to know."

As Durk's own creativity had been liberated by working for William McCarthy, so Stanton's was liberated by working for Durk. Durk eventually made Stanton his chief deputy, and, along with the office's legal counsel, Barbara Bishop, who had been recruited by Durk from the Department of Consumer Affairs, they developed sources, pieced together a picture of tax evasion in the cigarette world, and brought new life to what had been a stagnant backwater of city government. Durk's office, which was between Centre and Lafayette Streets, not far from City Hall, faced a large open area where some forty auditors toiled listlessly, pencils in hand. They sat down in unison at the beginning of the day and rose in unison at the end. Into this enervating scene was now introduced the spectacle of Durk, Stanton, and Bishop—the three musketeers of tax enforcement—sweeping, tornado-like, through the ranks of auditor-filled desks.

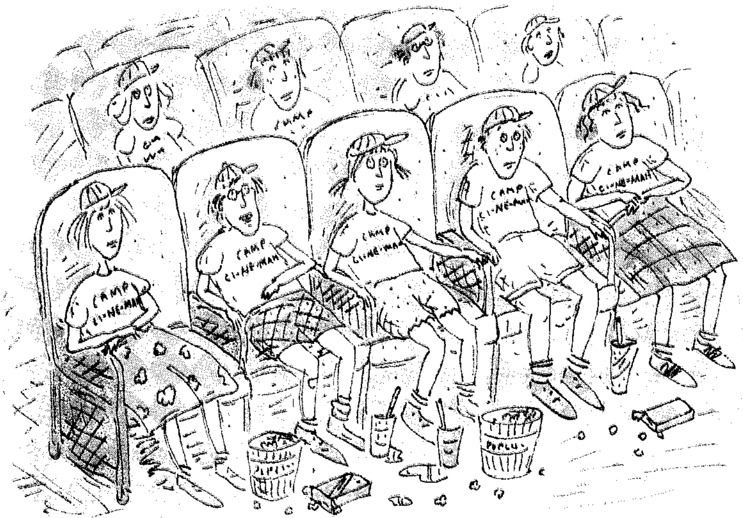
They had a sort of fourth musketeer in Philip Michael, who had been designated to act as Durk's unofficial handler. Michael often expressed annoyance, real or feigned, with the problems that Durk brought to him, but, on the whole, he was a fellow-conspirator, who shared in the pleasure of their rebellion against the old ways of the Finance Department. (When, in September, 1980, Michael was named finance commissioner, some people thought that he had reason to be grateful as well as admiring—that he had received his new job partly because it had been his idea to bring in Durk.)

Durk had expected to concentrate on apprehending "buttleggers"—smugglers who plied a trade between the low-tax, tobacco-growing states of the South and the high-tax, tobacco-consuming states of the North. But he soon discovered that cigarette-tax evasion took many forms and that some of its shrewdest practitioners were the so-called legitimate wholesalers—the companies responsible for collecting taxes (and stamping cigarette packs) on behalf of the city and the state. The wholesalers had no shortage of political clout, and bribery appeared to be an important element of their government-relations strategy. Although the democratic process tended to impose high tax rates on tobacco products, the whole-

CITY CAMPS

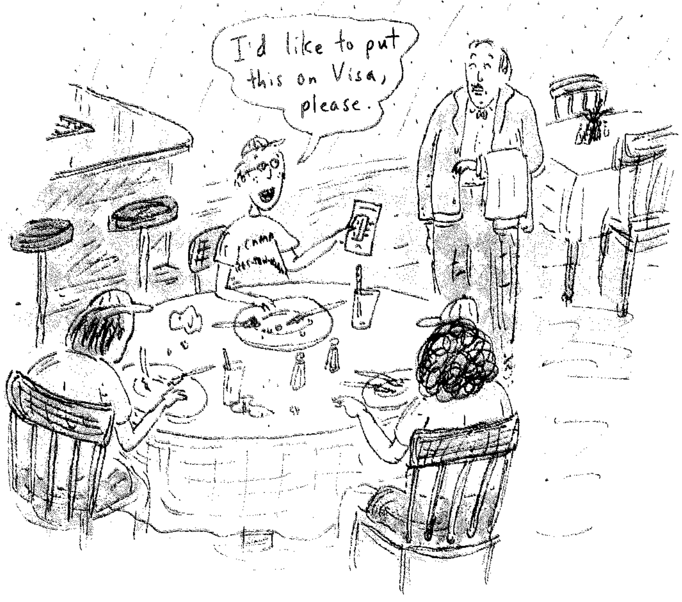
Camp Ci-Ne-Mah
862 Irving Place

Boys and girls aged five to fifteen spend six weeks going from movie house to movie house. Activities include blockbusters, crime dramas, comedies, serious European films, and revivals.


CAMP CI-NE-MAH
POPCORN

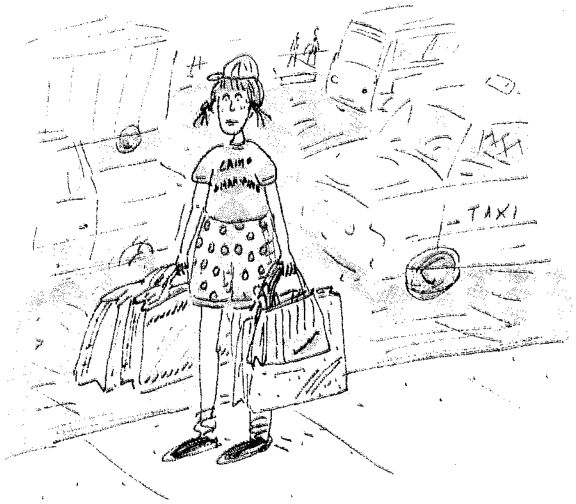
Camp Res-Toh-Rant
6475 East 89th Street

A wonderful summer lies ahead for campers aged six to fifteen. They will receive expert instruction in dealing with various cuisines, and also in making reservations, tipping, and paying by credit card.


I'd like to put this on Visa, please.
CAMP RES-TOH-RANT

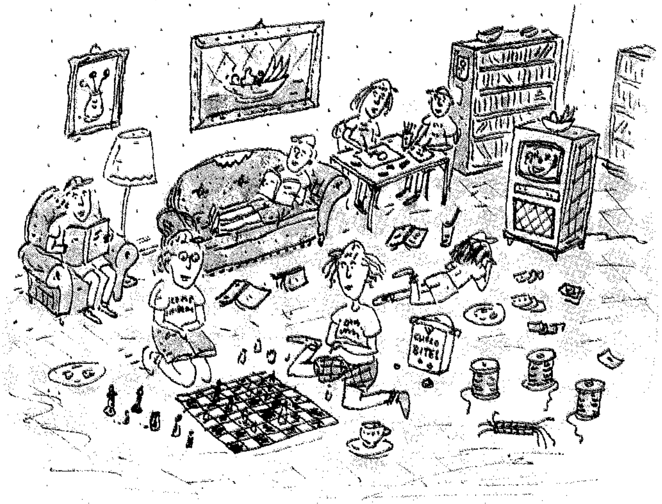
Camp Shah-Ping
9631 Lexington Avenue

An unforgettable experience for children aged seven to fourteen. They'll make friends for life as they browse through New York's finest department stores and boutiques. Established 1924.


CAMP SHAH-PING
TAXI

Camp In-Dor-O
1839 West End Avenue

Our forty-fifth year in this ten-room prewar apartment. A noncompetitive atmosphere for the quieter, less active child. We offer reading, coloring, TV, chess, Monopoly, lanyard-making, and more.


CAMP IN-DOR-O
CHEEZ BITS

R. Chast

salers had found, over the years, that the effect could quite often be mitigated by dispensing a comparatively small sum of money to a state legislator, a judge, a political boss, a tax investigator, or a deputy commissioner. On those occasions when wholesalers were actually apprehended for tax fraud, they could hire politically connected law firms, and, while the client could never be sure just where the money wound up, the fines were sometimes knocked down to a fraction of what they had been. In one case where a former state tax commissioner's firm was retained, a tax-evasion fine of eighty thousand dollars was reduced to twelve hundred.

The full extent of the intimacy among wholesalers, legislators, and tax officials became apparent to Durk when he and his team were summoned to a discussion of "legislative priorities" at the state Department of Taxation and Finance. He found himself being asked to approve a bill—backed by a wholesaler named Leonard Schwartz—that would sweeten the credit terms for the wholesalers, giving them sixty days instead of thirty to pay their taxes, supposedly as a gesture of concern for the health of an important New York State industry. The speaker of the state assembly, Stanley Fink, introduced Schwartz at the meeting as "my good friend" and explained that he and Schwartz had been classmates at New York University Law School. Fink, Durk says, seemed to expect the state and city tax people at the meeting to give immediate consent to the bill. When Durk demurred, inquiring whether he would have a chance to read the bill first, Fink glowered at him and asked, "Who are you?" When Durk gave his name, Fink looked nervously at his watch. "I'm running late," he said, and after one more brief appeal for support he excused himself and departed.

After a period of concentration on cigarette-tax schemes, Durk began branching out into other realms of the underground economy. With the help of a former con man named Edward Murphy, who managed a number of mob-controlled gay bars and was a leader in the Stonewall uprising, Durk and his people investigated some of the tax-evasion techniques employed by such places. At Murphy's suggestion, Durk sent in undercover agents with silent clickers—like the ones that bus inspectors use to count passengers—to check on how many drinks were served, and see how the tally squared with the place's tax payments. Inspired by Durk's example, another team of Finance investigators dug through old phone books at the Forty-second Street library in order to collect years' worth of commercial-rent taxes from businesses that had claimed to be newly established. Still another investigation went after truck-rental firms, package-delivery services, dial-a-cab companies, and the like, which had been neglecting to pay their commercial-motor-vehicle taxes.

One of Durk's first big successes was getting the tobacco companies to pay the taxes they owed on samples that they gave away on sidewalks to promote new brands. In May of 1979, an irate phone call from Durk to R. J. Reynolds about one tax-free giveaway produced, a day later, a check for nearly a hundred and thirty-six thousand dollars. When Mayor Koch heard about it, he invited Durk over to City Hall, asked to see the check, gave it a kiss, and did a little dance around the office, waving it in the air.

A phone message from Anna Quindlen, then a reporter for the *Times*, was waiting for Durk when he returned to his office.

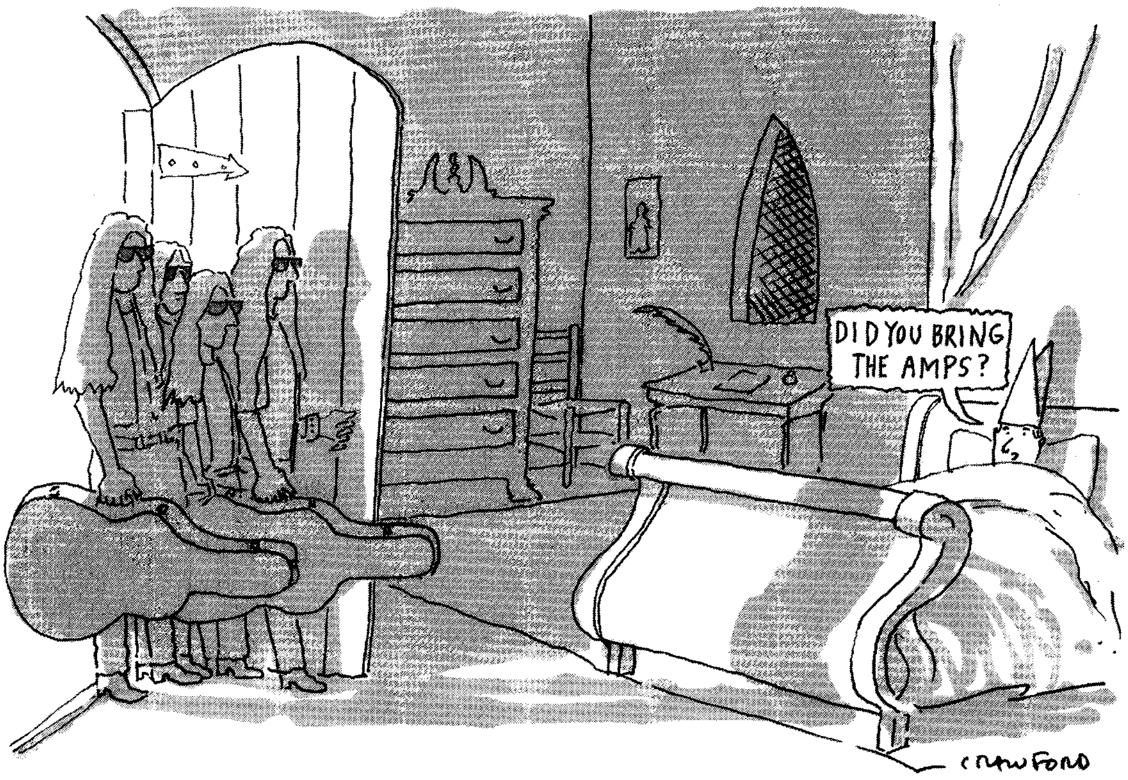
"I'm not allowed to give interviews," he told Quindlen.

"The Mayor's office told me to call you," Quindlen said. Her story, headed "CIGARETTE MAKER PAYS UP," appeared on the front page of the Metropolitan section the next day.

By the fall, Durk could report that city cigarette-tax revenues for the first half of 1979 had increased by two million six hundred thousand dollars over the previous year, though the industry was reporting a decrease in sales, and tax collection at the state level was down. He received a note from the Mayor congratulating him on "the superb job you are doing in rooting out incompetence, and collecting taxes heretofore uncollected." Durk had found a pleasing niche for himself: he was generating significant amounts of new revenue for the City, and some exceedingly good press for Koch and his administration. But he was also stepping on a dangerous number of toes. Stanley Lupkin, the commissioner of investigation, later complained that Durk was "an unguided missile," because, among other things, his cigarette-tax investigators—now outfitted with cheap tape recorders, which Durk had bought for the purpose—were making bribery collars when retailers offered them money to overlook violations of the law. Durk regarded these arrests as a declaration of independence from the ways of the past: the squad was announcing to the cigarette industry and to the rest of the city government that it couldn't be bought. But bribery, Lupkin pointed out, was his department's lookout, and a Finance Department employee who received a bribe offer should report it to the Department of Investigation.

Durk complained to Koch that Lupkin's people made every bribery case an elaborate production. Koch responded with what Durk refers to as the "Why can't you play in the sandbox with the other children?" memo. Koch wrote, "It is . . . distressing that notwithstanding your obvious talents, you are constantly in conflict with every agency and official with whom you come into contact. . . . I am not interested in a lengthy dialogue as to why you cannot work with or get along with this person or the other."

Another agency with which Durk conspicuously failed to get along was the state tax department's enforcement unit, the Albany counterpart of his unit. Soon after taking his job at Finance, Durk met an informant—an old-time buttlegger—who claimed to have been paying off state tax investigators for years in what amounted to a small-scale version of the liquor-related corruption of Prohibition days. The buttlegger said he was moved to confide in Durk by his anger over an incident in which a senior state tax supervisor had caught him bringing a carload of contraband cigarettes into Brooklyn and had forced him to turn over the cigarettes in addition to all the money he had on him. "I had to get down on my knees and beg him for enough change to pay the bridge toll," the buttlegger said. Durk brought the F.B.I. into the case. The


DID YOU BRING THE AMPS?
CRAWFORD

MEGADETH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP

state tax people quickly figured out that they were under investigation—and who was behind it. Before long, they, in turn, accused Durk of suborning perjury (a charge that was soon dropped), as a result of an incident on Staten Island in which city agents got a search warrant for a house that state agents had under surveillance at the time, in an effort to get their own warrant. In effect, the two agencies were now investigating each other.

Although the manufacturers of cigarettes weren't themselves responsible for collecting any New York City taxes, Durk came to see the problem of tax evasion as a trail of culpability that led to their door. By choosing to do business with some parties and not with others, the tobacco companies effectively decided who could become a wholesaler and who couldn't, and in their decisions, it seemed to him, some of them showed a partiality to people of questionable integrity. Moreover, he was often rebuffed when he asked tobacco-company officials to help out with an investigation. "We are cigarette men, not policemen" was a common industry response to such appeals.

Durk had not been at Finance very long before he decided that the case-by-case approach to cigarette-tax fraud was a losing game. If the city meant to address the problem in earnest, he told Michael, the whole existing system of tax collection would have to be ditched. Durk proposed a tax stamp that would be placed beneath the shrink wrapper of the cigarette pack—applied at the factory, under official supervision. But when he put this idea to the tobacco companies' tax people—offering, on the city's behalf, to underwrite the cost for a yearlong experiment—they turned him down flat. Nor was the reaction any better when Mayor Koch presented the concept directly to George Weissman, the C.E.O. of Philip Morris. "It would slow down our whole process," Koch quoted Weissman as saying. Durk was enraged by this response—the more so when he learned that the tobacco companies already employed an under-the-wrapper stamp for a number of foreign countries, including some very small ones, like Yemen. "I want the same courtesy for New York," Durk told a Philip Morris executive. "If you won't put a stamp under the wrapper, just put some kind of mark—a dot, a square, a picture of George Weissman's nose."

On New Year's Day, 1981, Durk and Stanton had a series of talks with the manager of a bankrupt Bronx distribution company who had blown the whistle on his boss for walking off with tens of thousands of dollars in cash just as his company was supposedly collapsing from debt. The manager agreed to act as a front if the city would set him up as a wholesaler. Durk was exhilarated. This, he believed, was the breakthrough that would lead to proof that the tobacco companies were in league with the wholesalers in a massive effort to evade taxes and thus boost sales. He dreamed of bringing a RICO (the acronym for "racketeer-influenced and corrupt organizations") lawsuit that would seek hundreds of millions of dollars in damages from Pitney Bowes, the wholesalers, and the manufacturers. For Michael, too, it was a pivotal moment: he decided that Durk had been investigating the tobacco industry long enough. "I want you out of cigarettes," he told Durk. "I'm not interested in them anymore, and you shouldn't be."

When I asked Michael recently to explain the thinking behind this move, he talked numbers. Cigarette taxes, he said, had accounted for only a hundred and sixty million of roughly fifteen billion dollars in annual city revenues, and, after some dramatic early results, Durk's gains on the tobacco front had fallen short of Michael's hopes. Durk, for his part, told me that a great opportunity had been lost, and he surmised that the tobacco industry had brought pressure to bear. At the time, however, he accepted the decision with what was, for him, good grace—

HOLLYWOOD ENDING
THE END IS HERE
CREDITS
LEVIN

the good grace being attributable largely to the fact that he had already begun laying plans for another big investigation. This time, he was going after some of the most prestigious Fifth Avenue merchants for conspiring with purchasers of expensive clothing, furs, and jewelry to avoid New York City's sales tax—typically, by sending an empty box to an out-of-state address. To test the waters, Durk went on an undercover shopping expedition, accompanied by a Finance Department administrator named Laura Weisel. They posed as an engaged couple—he a down-at-the-heels professor, she an heiress—searching for a wedding present that her mother was to give them. At store after store, Durk asked about sales taxes on the goods they were examining, and helpful employees offered to send an empty box to his out-of-state home; if he said he didn't have one, he was asked if he knew anybody who did. A preliminary survey of the most expensive transactions—ten thousand dollars and more—indicated a problem of whopping proportions: nine out of ten such purchases were going untaxed. A high-ranking Finance Department attorney argued that what Durk proposed was entrapment, pure and simple, but an enthusiastic endorsement from Mayor Koch, whose sister had complained to him about the empty-box ploy, overwhelmed the opposition.

When the undercover phase of Big Ticket, as the investigation came to be known, was completed, the Finance Department requested sales records from stores that had come under suspicion. One jeweller—Bulgari, in the Pierre Hotel—balked at turning over some of its records, and police officers and city and state tax agents armed with shotguns invaded the store and seized its files; the raid, which was reported on the front page of the *Times*, was the Finance Department's way of sending a message to other merchants contemplating noncoöperation. Among the firms ultimately indicted were Cartier, which agreed to pay the city more than two million dollars in fines and unreported taxes, and Van Cleef & Arpels, which forked over more than five million—the largest amount the city had ever collected for sales-tax delinquency. Mayor Koch was delighted; he insisted on having press conferences at City Hall at which he personally announced Big Ticket indictments and settlements, instead of letting the prosecutors steal the show, as they usually did.

Durk was not so delighted. The Big Ticket audits had uncovered transactions involving some exceedingly well-known and well-heeled people, including (as a story in *Newsday* characterized them, naming no names) "a former national security adviser, a billionaire arms dealer from the Arab world, a 'queen' of a hotel empire, a real estate developer now specializing in skating rinks, a famous azure-eyed singer who appears in casino ads, a casino owner who also appears in the ads, a liquor magnate whose family originally ran hootch out of Canada and a television interview personality with a slight lisp."

Durk had envisioned Big Ticket as an educational tool. He was looking for a quantum leap upward in tax-law compliance, born of a growing faith on the part of individual taxpayers that others were paying their fair share. For years, he had been complaining about the leniency that the criminal-justice system showed toward people with "magic numbers"—a phrase of his coining, which referred, literally, to a phone number a person might call in the hope of getting special treatment and, metaphorically, to the clout of the sort of person who possessed such a number. Here was a chance, it seemed to Durk, to demonstrate that magic numbers, for once, didn't count. He could imagine such a result, however, only if a symbolic handful of customers were prosecuted. (In consultation with David Garth, Durk had laid plans for a public-service advertising campaign that would call attention to the Big Ticket cases. They had even talked about having celebrity tax cheats appear in the ads, warning others not to follow in their footsteps.)

The question of prosecution was, of course, for prosecutors to decide. It fell, specifically, to the New York State Attorney General, Robert Abrams, and the Manhattan District Attorney, Robert Morgenthau—and, to Durk's distress, they decided not to bring charges against the customers. He was equally unhappy about the failure, except in one case, to bring criminal charges against the owners or managers of the stores involved, despite the fact that one manager had offered his own Connecticut home as an out-of-state destination for a ninety-thousand-dollar clock that was sold to a publishing magnate. As for the impressive-sounding fines, Durk objected that if you factored in the probability of getting caught, and the prime rate, the fines were not much greater than the taxes that had been evaded. "The lesson was that if you get caught you pay the back taxes," he says. "So if you're willing to risk the embarrassment why shouldn't you cheat?"

In 1984, a detective whom Durk disliked was installed under him, without his approval, as his "chief investigator," and Durk himself was relocated to an office in the Municipal Building—close to Philip Michael but far from his investigators. With his usual obliviousness, Durk was making preparations for another investigation—of tax evasion in the sale of art, antiques, and Persian carpets. In November, while he was lining up undercovers and laying plans, Michael announced his imminent departure from city government to go to work for Merrill Lynch. Frayed though their relations had become, this was bad news for Durk. He took an instant dislike to Michael's successor, Paul Crotty—a member of a prominent family in the state Democratic Party—and Crotty evidently had much the same feeling about Durk and his investigations. It soon emerged that the Mayor's personnel office was "reclassifying" Durk from assistant commissioner to staff analyst—an adjustment that would bring his annual salary, which had climbed into the sixty-thousand-dollar neighborhood, down to less than forty thousand. Even Durk now perceived that there would be nothing but grief in store for him if he remained at Finance, and he began looking for another job with the city. He inquired about returning to the Police Department but was told that too much time had passed: the department didn't have to take him back, and all but said that it wouldn't. He had become persona non grata within the Koch administration. He decided to take his pension—only to find that it, too, was going to be far smaller than he had supposed. Because of a technicality that proved too costly for him to challenge in court, Durk's seven years of service at Finance were to be disregarded in the calculation of his retirement benefit. If he had remained a police lieutenant for those years, his pension would have come to about thirty-four thousand dollars a year; as it was, he would receive less than seventeen thousand dollars.

It is difficult to give a precise reason for Durk's removal from law enforcement. Durk himself points to a gradual change in Mayor Koch and his administration. After his reëlection in 1981, Durk says, Koch became increasingly sensitive to the concerns of business—and increasingly uncomfortable with Durk and his stories of chicanery and corruption. "In the beginning, he was sending me notes and inviting me over to Gracie Mansion—he thought the attitude of the tobacco companies was outrageous," Durk says. "By the end, if I tried to talk privately to him about something, he got furious."

Philip Michael saw things differently. "David was continually asking you to side with him against everybody else," he says. "He kept denouncing people."

Jeremiah McKenna, a lawyer who has worked with Durk on several recent matters and who served for seventeen years as counsel to the State Senate Committee on Crime, offers another perspective. In one field after another, McKenna says, Durk had found evidence indicating that the problem of unpaid taxes involved not just a handful of ne'er-do-wells but an industry practice. While Durk had been concentrating on tobacco, expensive shops, and art, McKenna had been looking into the nonpayment of liquor and gasoline taxes. (In May of 1993, a federal grand jury in New Jersey indicted thirteen men in a scheme intended to evade sixty million dollars in taxes on gasoline and fuel oil. The United States Attorney for New Jersey estimated that, between state and federal taxes, the total tax losses on these products nationally come to more than two billion dollars a year.) Like Durk, McKenna developed a reputation for making waves, and he, too, was forced out of his job. "The Roman Empire fell when the provincial tax collectors stopped giving the money to Rome and kept it all for themselves," McKenna says. "In America today, the cigarette industry, the gasoline industry, and the art industry, among others, are collecting taxes and not giving them back to the government—or are giving a portion back to the people who run the government in the form of campaign contributions. David walked into this. He was following a trail, and he kept following the trail, as any good investigator will. David in the eighties was onto what is in my mind the scandal of the nineties, because it involves more industries now, and the sums are absolutely enormous."

In the seven years since Durk's departure from the Finance Department, he has been fitfully employed as a consultant on white-collar crime, police brutality, and corruption. But his most time-consuming work—and the greatest source of satisfaction in his recent life—has been in a field that might be called whistle-blower management. Ever since the Knapp Commission days, he has been getting phone calls from frazzled civil servants in need of advice on how they can safely report illegalities committed within their agencies, or, if they have already done so, how they can save their professional skins.

There was a time when Durk hoped to establish a formal center for whistle-blowers—an institution that would see to their professional, physical, and psychic well-being, in addition to getting their complaints acted on. The idea seemed to be headed somewhere after it received a public endorsement, in 1986, from the then United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Rudolph Giuliani, with whom Durk had developed a good rapport. In the end, though, the project died for lack of funding, and the only tangible results of the discussions with Giuliani were a few press items about it—including one in this magazine—which led to a new spurt of inquiries from whistle-blowers, and thus to more hours of unpaid labor (and ever-mounting phone bills) for Durk. In effect, he has become the whistle-blower center.

A case that has consumed a lot of

Durk's time lately is that of William Acosta, who sought him out in desperation after being forced to resign from the N.Y.P.D. a year and a half ago. Officially, he was charged with "falsifying police records." According to Acosta, however, his real offense was to run afoul of a clique of cops in his precinct by, among other things, reporting the presence of illegal gambling machines in bars and restaurants that were frequented by his colleagues and telling an off-duty police chief that he was too drunk to drive. On one occasion, Acosta suspects, co-workers made off with thousands of dollars in cash from the apartment of a dead man, but when Acosta tried to report the incident by calling an anonymous Internal Affairs hotline he was asked for his name and badge number, and hung up.

Durk had barely begun to look into Acosta's case when, last November, Acosta gave the police information that led to the arrest of two brothers in the stabbing of an off-duty corrections officer and the theft of his gun. (They had been stabbed themselves during the assault, and, searching for a place to wash the blood off, they had burst into the storefront school in Queens where Acosta teaches Tae Kwon Do.) The Queens D.A.'s office told Acosta that his identity would be protected but then, he says, gave the suspects' lawyer a report describing the informant, unmistakably, as a "former police officer." Then, according to Acosta, a relative of the two brothers came to his school, and asked him if he knew "what happens to people who testify against other people." He did not testify, because the D.A.'s office struck a deal in which one of the brothers pleaded guilty to attempted murder, and the other to assault. They are currently in prison, and Acosta says he is keeping close tabs on their release dates.

Durk has a four-level classification system for whistle-blowers: good person/good information, bad person/good information, good person/bad information, and bad person/bad information. He put Acosta into the first category, and hooked him up with a lawyer who agreed to plead his case for reinstatement. Although the lawsuit is still tied up in procedural questions, Durk, who has been gathering evidence on Acosta's behalf, says he believes that Acosta will eventually be vindicated and accepted back into the N.Y.P.D. I asked Acosta recently what, as an ousted cop, he had gained from consulting Durk, another ousted cop. "David has connections with good people in law enforcement—the people who understand the situation I'm in," Acosta said, adding that "he gave me what I didn't have: that sense that someone else believed in me."

YOU COME WHEN I CALL YOU

I was very trusting and very dangerous
the night Committee Members arrived.
Something that smelled like wet dog wrapped my eyes.
Sleeping naked, I was permitted to dress,
as someone explained how by white- and black-
ball election I was last among their choices.
At first, the friendly timbre of the voices
comforted me . . . until I was prodded like an ass
into a truck (or like the missing child Jed,
I remember thinking, whose face appeared
on my milk carton), where I could hear
others, like me, breathing prostrate on the flatbed
and the zealous talk of Brotherhood
at their seats in the cab. Drinking from flasks,
they jeered at us in our doggy masks.
Though we could not see, how we understood!
They steered us to a lake in the Commonwealth,
and, speaking in a language designated
by little Greek letters, revealed themselves
as a court for the uninitiated.
A man must make do the best he can
in a world where goodness is stamped out:
that much I resolved that humid morning South
as I drank, kneeling like a broken man,
from a sulfur spring with other Pledges,
then pressed my lips in adoration to pages
of a book held before me. "A French kiss!
She's giving it the tongue!" the Chairman hissed.
Then suddenly the proceedings ended.
My wrists and red eyes untied, I was asked
to sing songs the Little Sisters, steadfast
behind their Brothers, belted out. Legends
of Reconstruction teach us a few good things—
about pride, that is, as how a ruined
land with hospitals and barracks was soon
our little college. Yet in that lamentable
fraternal Gamma code I found not one
natural Brother, only niggling dues to be paid,
committees, like dogs paraded
on leashes, straining toward women,
immolation of spirit, a berated
God, nobility worn like a harness,
a sour apple in the heart, and this,
this was the congenial state I'd awaited.

—Henri Cole

THE voters of New York City, just as they had given Durk's hopes a lift by making Ed Koch mayor in 1977, gave his hopes another lift by removing him from office in 1989. No sooner had the administration of Koch's successor, David Dinkins, begun taking shape than Durk made contact with several Dinkins appointees about possible investigative jobs. Almost invariably, when I talked to him in this period, he was working out the final details—salary, title, and so on—of his imminent return to law enforcement. But then, one after another, the prospects evaporated, and it became apparent that his employment problems were not confined to any one mayoral administration—that, as the *Newsday* comumnist Sydney Schanberg has observed, "David lives in the craw of a lot of people who still exercise power in this city."

In the middle and lower ranks of law enforcement, Durk is remembered more fondly. His former subordinates often speak of the association as a high point of their careers—indeed, a few have volunteered to me that if Durk gets another job in law enforcement they would like nothing better than to join up with him again. Others have spoken of lessons they learned from Durk and have continued to apply. Barbara Bishop, his legal counsel in the Finance Department, told me that she had often used his techniques for questioning people and cultivating sources, including a line of his that went "I'm not asking you to trust me—just test me." Susan Thomas, a former Finance investigator—and a student of Durk's at Yale—who is now employed as a special agent with the federal government, told me that when she is faced with an ethical dilemma she sometimes asks herself, "What would David do?"

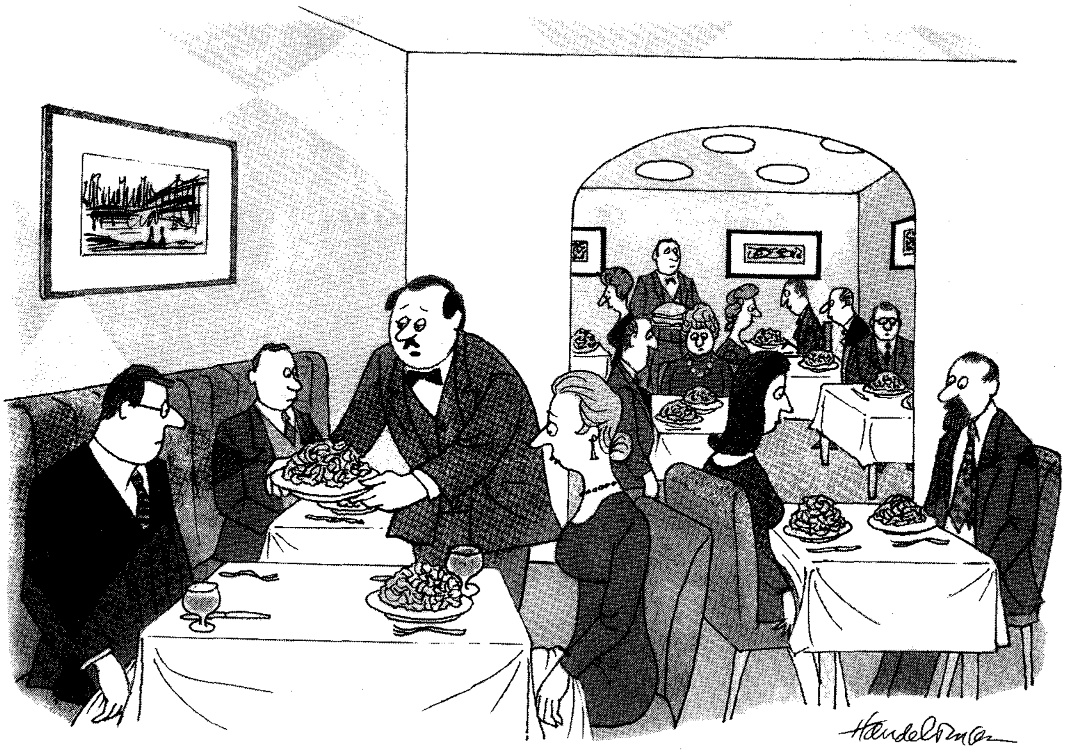
"There's still a core of people here who identify themselves as Durk people," Tom Stanton, who holds what amounts to Durk's old job at Finance, told me. One of the characteristics of a Durk person, Stanton added, is the readiness to challenge a supervisor who gives an order that is less than kosher.

Most people, after having the door slammed in their faces as often as it has been in Durk's, would assume that the way was barred for good. Durk seems to treat each disappointment as a case unto itself, however, and before long he is back in high job-hunting gear. He will read about a vacancy somewhere, and, even as he is filling out his application and mobilizing references, he begins making plans for things he intends to do once he lands the job. If he were hired as police chief of Cambridge, Massachusetts, Durk told me—a few days before he received a letter from the Cambridge search committee informing him that he had failed to meet the requirements for consideration—he would use the opportunity to prove the falseness of a whole set of cynical assumptions about the police. "All this business about endemic hostility between the police and the community is just nonsense—whether you're talking about New York or anywhere else," he said, sounding as fiery as a soapbox orator. "The story of police reform is like the story of Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society. It's not that we tried and failed. We have never really tried."

Perhaps the most obvious effect on Durk of repeated rejection has been a tendency, as he plunges into a job inquiry, to try to head off possible problems by introducing them up front. Sometimes he startles potential employers by asking them to imagine delicate situations in which their expectations and his might come into conflict. One friend of Durk's, after greasing the wheels for an investigative position with a high official of New York State, was confounded to learn that Durk, in his job interview, had raised the possibility of finding corruption in his prospective boss's own office. That was the last he heard about that job.

Friends of Durk's have urged him to keep his presentations simple, but things are rarely simple with Durk. No matter what people actually ask him, he feels another question emanating from them: Why, at his age, with his accomplishments, doesn't he already have a job in the field he loves?

The day has passed when Durk's appearance at a police facility is an occasion for guaranteed hysteria. To some extent, this is just the natural forgetfulness of a profession, and a world, that tends to focus on the present. But it is also a process that has been actively urged along by the official and unofficial keepers of local law-enforcement history. Last June, some of the alumni of the Knapp investigation got together for a twentieth-anniversary reunion dinner. The event had been planned for



"Sorry, folks—it's not what you ordered, but everyone is getting fettuccine until we fix the computer."

many weeks, and the guests included a few dozen of what the *Times* called "members and friends" of the commission. Durk was not invited until the night before, however, and he did not attend.

A QUESTION I have posed to an assortment of people, getting an assortment of responses, is how they feel about the recent course of Durk's career. Former Mayor Koch, among others, took the position that Durk's troubles were essentially of his own making. Koch described Durk as "an extremely creative, able person who has a problem. People are afraid to work with him. They're afraid he's going to say he has told them something, and they didn't do what he wanted them to do. That's why I never allowed him to report to me directly. He always had to go through an intermediary. I admire him—I just never wanted to be alone with him."

David Burnham, who left the *Times* in order to write books about the Big Brotherly workings of such institutions as the Internal Revenue Service and the Justice Department, pointed out that the Knapp Commission scandal cut deeper than the police-corruption scandals of previous eras, and said that this effect was in no small part Durk's doing. "From what I've read of the history of the earlier moments of alleged reform, with most of them there would be the scandal, and everyone would go 'Tsk, tsk,' and we'd go right back to where we were before," he said. "What Durk did was to insist on the political accountability of the city fathers. Today, when you read about a government scandal in the newspapers, people aren't usually satisfied with the rotten-apple theory; they're looking at the system and at the people in charge. Durk made a big contribution to that. He's manipulative, and impossible to understand, and he's a huge pain in the ass, but he's a brilliant guy. His nose is very keen. He's a very brave and true and good man, and a great civil servant. Somehow, it ought to be possible to find a place for him to function."

"David Durk is a walking embarrassment to us," David Garth, who is currently working on Giuliani's mayoral campaign, said. "With all his meshugaas, he's more trustworthy than the people who don't trust him. Most of them are system people. Catching the bad guy is not always the No. 1 goal with them; surviving is the No. 1 goal. With Durk, it's the opposite. He's a hot potato. He's a guy who has to be handled. He isn't just somebody who rocks the boat—he'll put a fucking hole through the boat to rock it. And he's always got his eye out for somebody who may be playing the slightest game. But he really loves cops. Somebody should make him a police commissioner. He'd cause hell; half the guys in the back room would be saying, 'This guy is full of shit.' But some people would be caught up."

"He's a zealot, but a non-zealot would never have done what he did," Lawrence Goldman, a criminal-defense lawyer who worked with Durk in the sixties, said. "In terms of the history of this city, he made a tremendous difference, and how many people can you say that about? It's societally wrong, what's happened to him. Somebody, somewhere, should give him some money and say, 'Durk, go be Durk.' "

Thomas Reppetto, the president of the Citizens' Crime Commission of New York City, approached the subject of Durk's fortunes via a short memoir of his own career, in the Chicago Police Department—a career that dead-ended after he took a leave and obtained a doctorate in public administration from Harvard. "Some people might think it's a good thing to get a Harvard doctorate," Reppetto said. "But when I came back I was dropped down from commander to captain, and it was made very clear to me that I had no future. And I was by no means a Durk. When I look at him, I see what would have happened to me if I had stayed around in Chicago. I'd have started swinging wild."

Last summer, Reppetto succeeded in setting up a lunch with Durk and Police Commissioner Lee Brown. His immediate reason for bringing them together was to have Durk give Brown—a non-New Yorker—some historical perspective on police corruption and ways of combatting it. But it was in the back of Reppetto's mind that Brown just might come around to offering Durk a job.

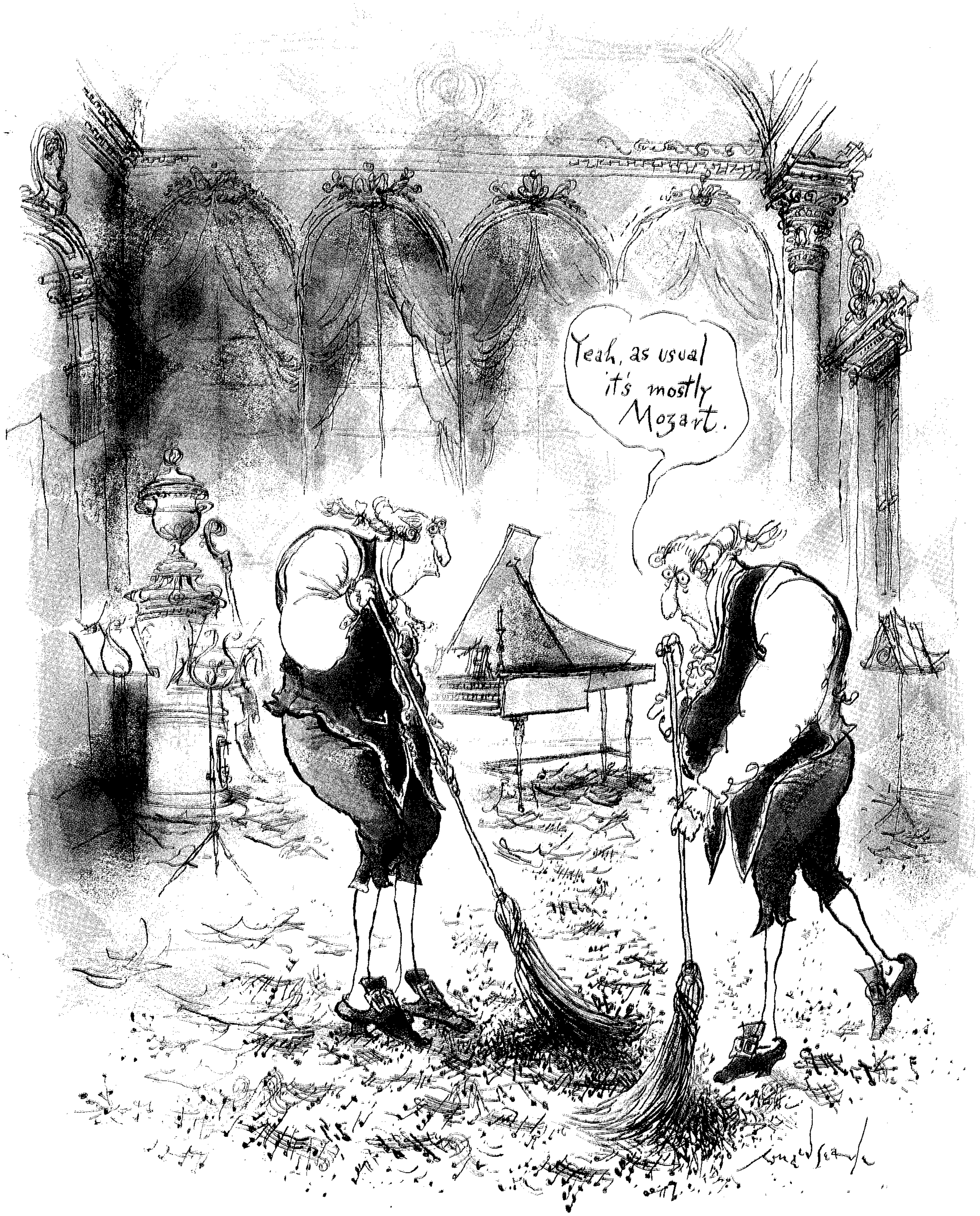
Reppetto had some trepidation about the get-together. He was worried that Durk might get off on a tangent. He might, for example, have voiced his doubts about the community-policing movement, of which Brown has been a leading apostle. Durk has expressed to me his opinion that community policing often boils down to things like securing traffic lights for intersections that need them. ("The cop calls up the Traffic Department, and six months later they put in a light, and everybody pats each other on the back," he has said.) There was also the danger that Durk might start talking about what he calls "the Kitty Genovese phenomenon among cops," which he traces back to the Knapp era and to Commissioner Patrick Murphy. On that subject, Durk might have said (as he has said to me), "Thirty years ago, you had the Kitty Genovese case, in which a bunch of people watched a woman being killed, and did nothing. You now have the Kitty Genovese phenomenon among cops. At the sound of the crash, they run the other way. Ever since Knapp, the real problem with the Police Department has been massive malingering, and it's totally justified, given the disciplinary policies of the department. If a cop makes an off-duty arrest, the first question he gets asked is 'Were you drinking?' and the second question is 'What did you get involved for?' "

But, to Reppetto's relief, Durk avoided those subjects, and a multitude of others that might have been impolitic. Durk was on his best behavior, and he himself admitted afterward that he had found Brown unexpectedly likable. Whether the lunch would have led to an offer of employment will never be known, however, because a few days later Brown announced that he was resigning in order to spend more time with his wife, who (it emerged) was terminally ill.

By the time of Brown's departure, the department was in the grip of another corruption scandal, centering on the arrest of a group of cops and former cops who had allegedly been running a cocaine ring. For Durk, the case was an extremely familiar one, because he had helped alert Internal Affairs to the possible criminal activities of a number

ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK BY RONALD SEARLE

SOUR NOTES



Yeah, as usual it's mostly Mozart.
Ronald Searle

of those cops—including their now notorious leader, Michael Dowd—several years earlier. In 1985, a cop assigned to the 75th Precinct, in Brooklyn, came to Durk with a story about fourteen cops who were robbing drug dealers of guns, money, and drugs. "If they got a call for a man with a gun, or a man selling drugs, they would radio back not to send any assistance," Durk says. "That was their way of telling their confederates to join in, and the straight cops to stay away, so they could rip the guy off in peace." Durk confirmed the story with other cops, but because they were determined to remain anonymous he used an intermediary to deliver the information to Internal Affairs, figuring that the case would not be hard to investigate. The only apparent result of his efforts—the department also received other tips about these cops—was a decision to reassign them to new units, where they started up their criminal activities anew, free of the suspicion they had aroused in their former commands. Their arrest came in May of 1992—more than six years later—and it was the result of an investigation by the comparatively tiny Police Department of Suffolk County, Long Island, where several of the drug-dealing cops lived.

"The Internal Affairs people were given everything they needed to catch those guys," Durk says. "All they had to do was invent a call—three male Hispanics dealing drugs on the corner of wherever—and then put undercovers out there with wads of bills and let them be ripped off with the videotape running. But they wouldn't do that. They wouldn't do anything unless the cops who reported it agreed to come forward, identify themselves, and wear wires. From time immemorial, that's been the attitude; either you stand up and say '*J'accuse*' and your career is over, or you forget about it and go away." For years, almost every significant disclosure of corruption had been accompanied by reassurances, from department insiders and outsiders alike, that the problem was not the systematic and pervasive corruption of the years before the Knapp Commission. The distinction, however, was no longer that comforting.

Lee Brown's successor, Raymond Kelly, assumed office with the scandal in full bloom. He responded, much as Patrick Murphy had done two decades earlier, with vows of a crackdown; he has promised, in the words of the *Times*, an "expanded and centralized" Internal Affairs, outfitted with "advanced surveillance equipment" and "a new computerized information system."

"What's wrong with Internal Affairs has nothing to do with its size or equipment," Durk counters. "The problem is, if you're an honest cop—or an honest citizen—with information about corruption, you still get the same lousy set of choices you did before Knapp."

LATE one Friday evening not long ago, Durk was having dinner with a friend in a Chinatown restaurant when a wounded young man—bleeding from the nose, one ear, and the palms of both hands—burst in, with the three companions of a double date. He explained that he had verbally intervened in defense of a woman he had seen being beaten on a nearby corner. As a reward for his chivalry, a trash can had been smashed across his face. He wanted to call the police.

The proprietor of the restaurant told him that because he was not a patron he was not permitted to use the telephone.

"Well, I'm eating here," Durk piped up. "What if I make the phone call?"

On his way to the phone, Durk glanced out the window, spotted a uniformed cop in a doorway across the street, and went out to get him. He told the cop what had happened, and pointed out the perpetrators, who were still standing in plain view. But the cop declined to act, citing the fact that his radio was broken. Without a working radio, he explained, there was no way he could call for backup.

"Look," Durk said. "I used to be on the job. I'll help you."

The cop was adamant: the most he would do for the young man was help him and his friends find a taxi.

Eventually, Durk gave up on the cop and called 911—another obstacle course. The police operator said she couldn't send a car to the corner of Mott and Bayard, as Durk had requested, because her computer showed no such inter-

"Without Alice's job, we'd need a grant to keep us in the middle class."

section. Even after Durk persuaded her of its existence, he had to resort to artful exaggeration to get her to send help. "There's a cop here who's trying to make an arrest, and it looks like he's not doing too well," he said. For good measure, he invoked the radio code "10-85"—meaning a cop in need of assistance.

Within a few minutes, several police cars were on the scene, the assailants were in custody (pending further police deliberations), and the ranking official—a captain—was asking, "Where's the wise guy?"

"I guess you mean me," Durk said.

"What's with the 10-85?" said the captain.

"Well, you had an officer here who was reluctant to take some perps who had committed a felony until he had a backup, and I was simply trying to get a backup," Durk said. "Under the circumstances, I thought a 10-85 was appropriate."

The captain requested Durk's I.D.

"Look, why don't we just call it a day?" Durk said.

"You know, you could be locked up for obstruction of justice," the captain pointed out.

"Obstruction of justice! I thought it was enhancement of justice!" Durk protested.

"Let me see some I.D.," the captain repeated.

"O.K., I'll show you mine, you show me yours," Durk replied.

Of the two I.D.s, Durk's made the bigger impression. "I don't need this," the captain said with a sigh. "I'm going to be retiring in three weeks. Why are you doing this to me?"

"I'm really not looking to give you a hard time," Durk said. "I just want these people treated with some concern. They're victims. You're supposed to help them. I presume everyone here is getting paid."

"Well, you know there are problems about overtime," the captain confided in a low voice.

Durk said that he did know, but that police action had been warranted just the same. "I mean, wouldn't you agree, Captain, that this was an entirely legitimate assault case?"

The captain reluctantly agreed.

"I hope you have a wonderful retirement," Durk told him. ◆

PORTFOLIO

SLIGHT MODIFICATIONS

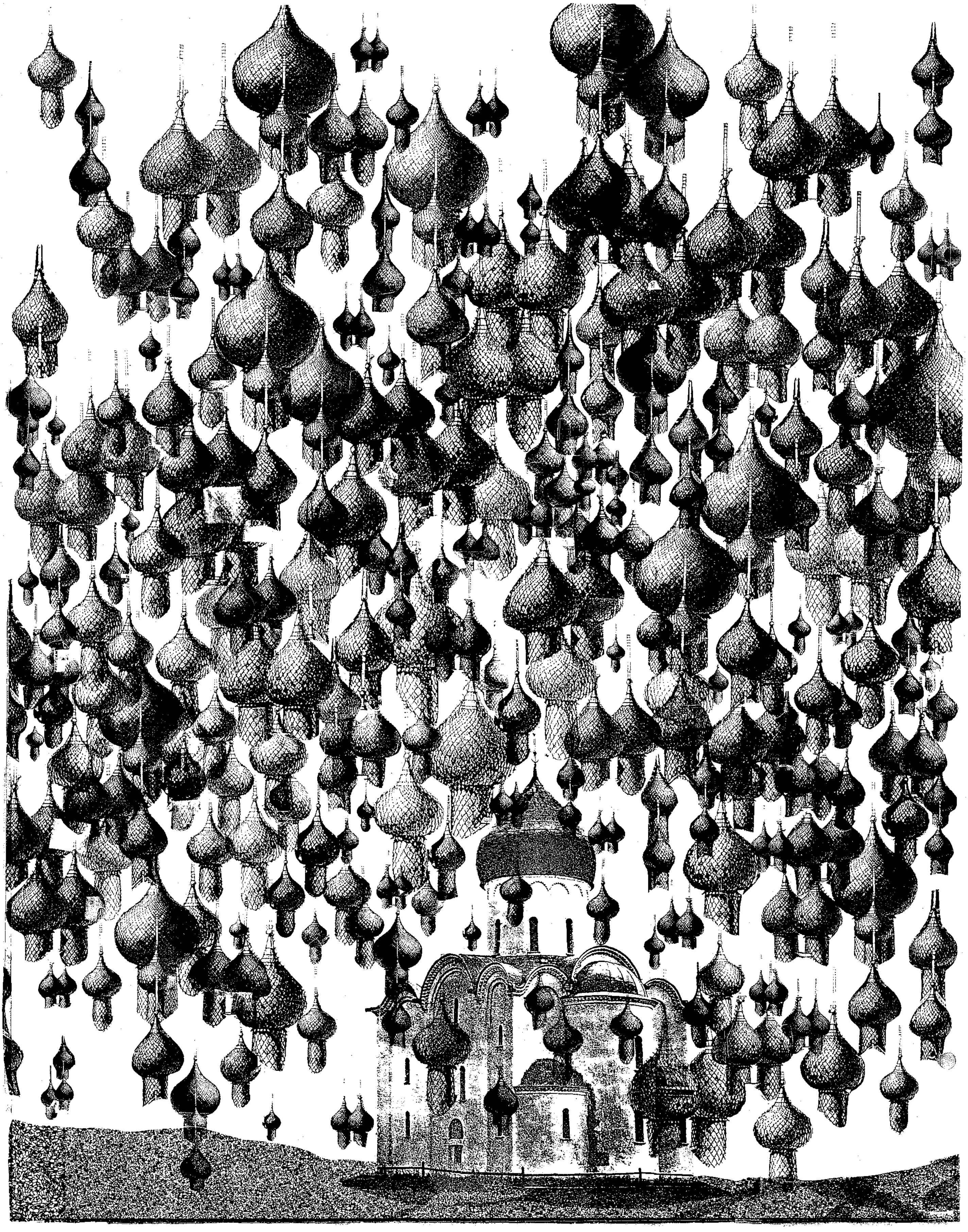
In the immediate aftermath of the farcical collapse of the Soviet Union's hard-line coup, in 1991, monuments all over the country—fierce icons of the longtime socialist-realist hegemony—were being toppled and carted off. Several thousand miles away, in their studio garret, in Tribeca, Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid—formerly among the ancien régime's most notorious dissident artists, and since the mid-nineteen-seventies among its most exasperating expatriates: the Marx and Engels, as they're sometimes called, of post-Soviet art—sat hunched before their television set, simultaneously mesmerized and appalled by the unfolding events.

"Of course, all very thrilling," Komar, the Falstaffian of the pair, recently recalled. "But at same time we were very bothered. Because, see, this is classic old Moscow technique: either worship or destroy. Bolsheviks topple czar monuments, Stalin erases old Bolsheviks, Khrushchev tears down Stalin, Brezhnev tears down Khrushchev, and now this. No difference. Each time it is history, the country's true past, which is conveniently being obliterated. And usually by same people! In most cases, these weren't passionate crowds doing tearing down—it was cool hand of officials, by bureaucratic fiat. Same guys who used to order our shows bulldozed now arranging these bulldozings."

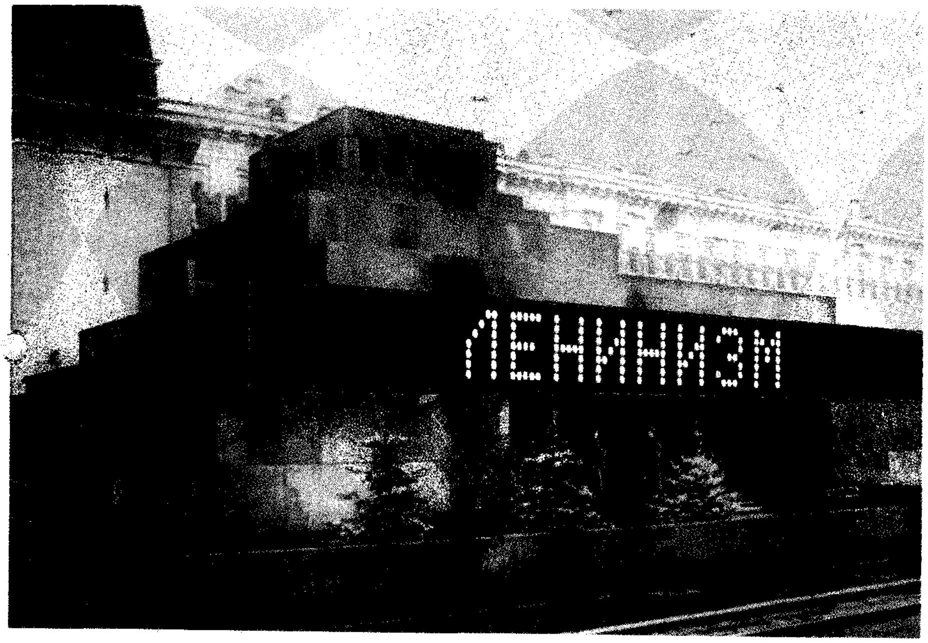
Komar and Melamid began considering the dilemma—indeed, the *emergency*, as they saw it—and trying to figure out if there might not be some third way, beyond the tendency either to worship or to destroy. They began to wonder whether artists might not be mobilized in an effort to save the monuments through transformation. They themselves almost immediately had the germ of an idea for Lenin's mausoleum. "Remove Lenin's corpse," Komar suggested. "Let him finally be buried, as he himself wished it in his will, by his mother's side. And then leave the sarcophagus there—empty. Leave everything as it is—as monument to nothing, to the abyss of human overreaching. Only change: on the exterior, where the word 'LENIN' is engraved in stone, just add three letters—'ISM.'" They telephoned that proposal to a Moscow newspaper, and also, in a casual way, they began asking other artists for their ideas. They hooked up with Joseph Bakshtein, the director of Moscow's newly formed Institute of Contemporary Art, who agreed to present a show of such proposals. Their search became more formal, and in the May, 1992, issue of *Artforum* they issued an open call for more proposals. "Fate has provided a unique opportunity," Komar and Melamid wrote. "We can turn Moscow into a phantasmagoric garden of 'post-totalitarian' art. It would be a shame to miss this chance, which is already passing." In order to prime their colleagues' creative pumps, they offered a few possible examples. Why not, for instance, "turn the monument of Marx in front of the Bolshoi Theater on its head, in homage to what he himself did to Hegel's dialectic"? And they elaborated on their idea for Lenin's tomb, tossing off, almost as an afterthought, the fantasy that "perhaps pink flamingos could be allowed to wander about the tribunal from which the leaders once greeted people on state holidays."

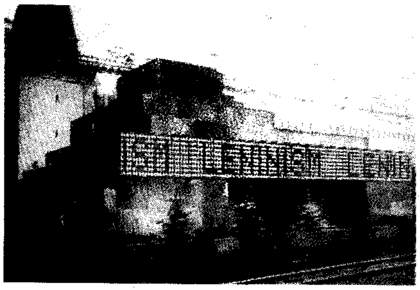
Proposals began pouring in from all over the world, and later this month identical shows, featuring more than two hundred of them—from artists both inside and outside the former Soviet Union—will be running concurrently in Moscow and New York City. The Manhattan version, under the auspices of Independent Curators Incorporated, will run from July 22nd through October 3rd in the Courtyard Gallery of the World Financial Center. The pages that follow afford a small preview.

"The thing is, this whole show is completely egotistical for us," Komar observes. "Yes, history should be preserved for future generations and all that. But these monuments, they are not just history for us, they are our lives. It's not so much the monuments themselves we want to preserve as the beautiful sweet world of our childhoods." He smiled sweetly, wickedly, savoring the memories. —LAWRENCE WESCHLER



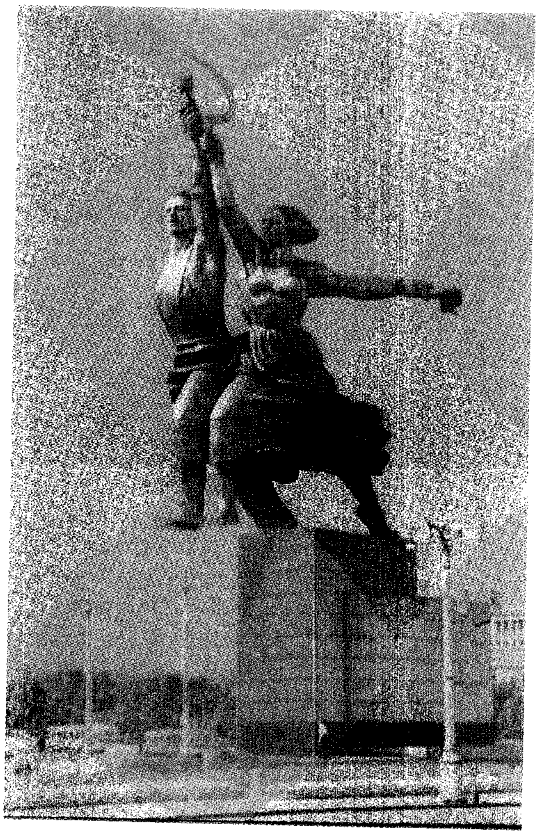
Petah Coyne advocates taking all the statues that have already been toppled and melting them down into "a new symbol of peace and hope"—specifically, ten thousand onion-dome-shaped chandeliers with thin metal skins, whose helium-filled interiors will allow them to float, glistening, in space, tethered to old churches and synagogues and other buildings all over the country.

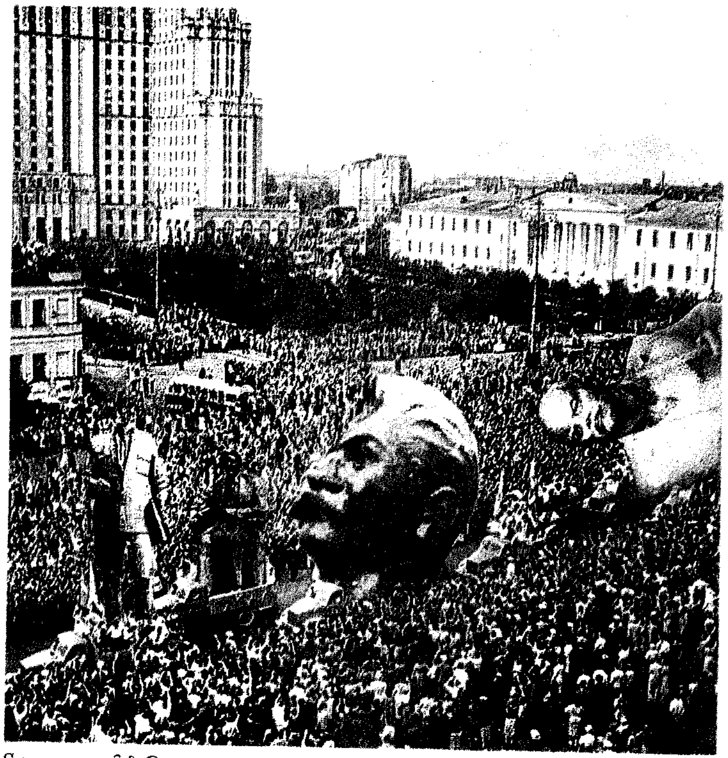




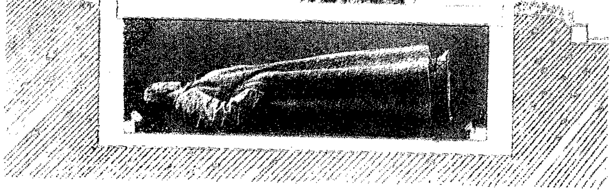
KOMAR & MELAMID propose salvaging Lenin's tomb simply by adding the suffix "ISM" to its name. In particular, they suggest having the word course across an electronic signboard that might also provide news updates, weather forecasts, Biblical quotations (such as "VANITY OF VANITIES"), Dadaist exclamations like "MAMA MAMA MAMA," or, in the event of some future dictatorship, the future dictator's name.

ART SPIEGELMAN would leave Moscow's famous "Worker and Peasant" monument exactly as it is, revising only the pedestal.

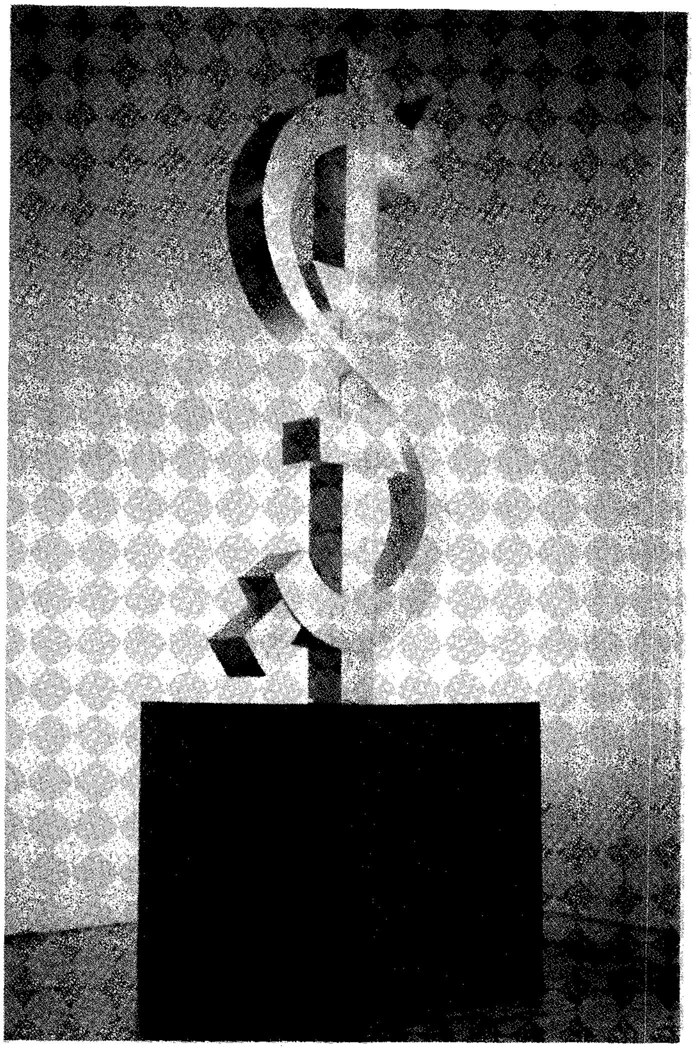




SCHERER & OUPOROV propose a mass ceremonial procession of the statues and monuments.

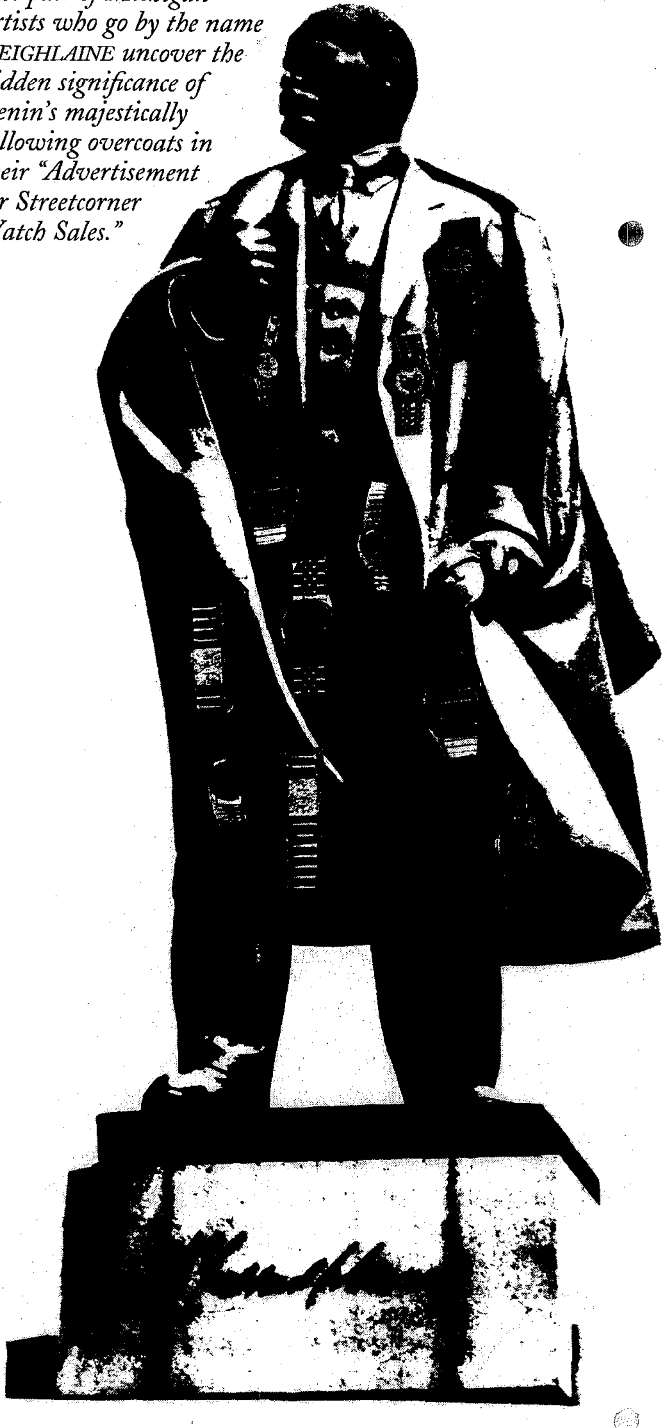


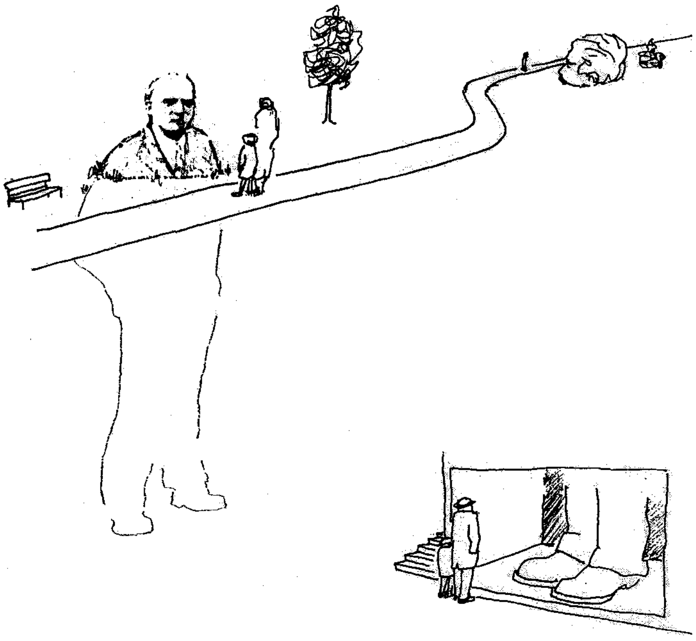
The procession would culminate in their actual burial.



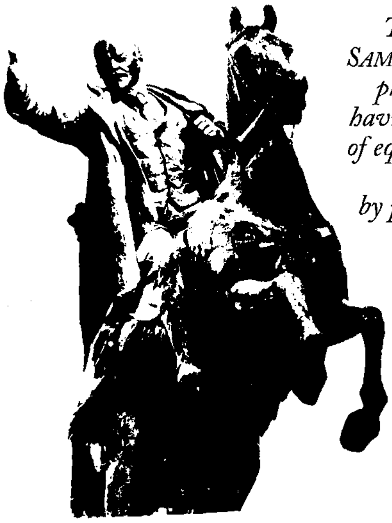
Leonid Lamm would make only a minor alteration in the traditional hammer and sickle.

The pair of Michigan artists who go by the name Leighlaine uncover the hidden significance of Lenin's majestically billowing overcoats in their "Advertisement for Streetcorner Watch Sales."

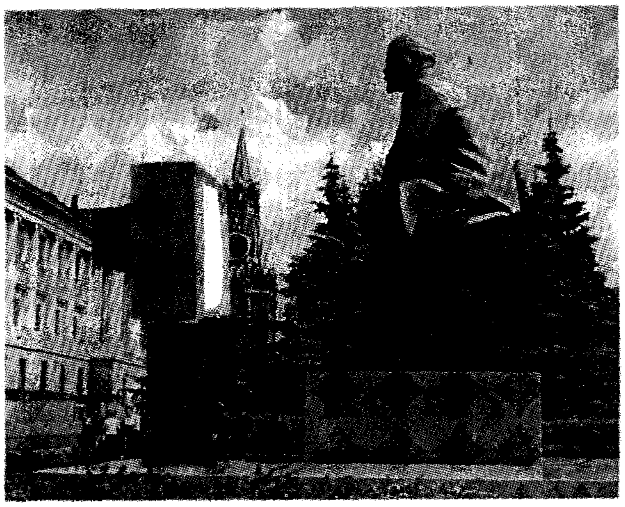


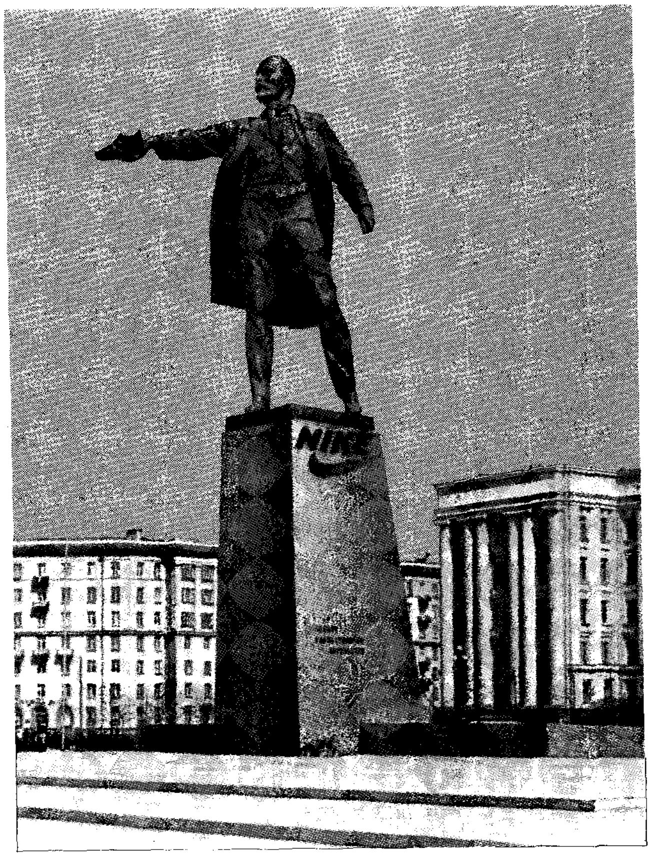


John Murray envisions burying the statues of former leaders, so that their heads and shoulders stick out of the ground, thereby simultaneously demystifying their former exalted status (by equalizing the viewing plane) while rendering the experience of gazing into their eyes all the more terrifying for being so intimate. For those nostalgic for the old relation, Murray adds, a subterranean viewing chamber might be carved out, reachable by stairs, where viewers could once again confront mainly feet.

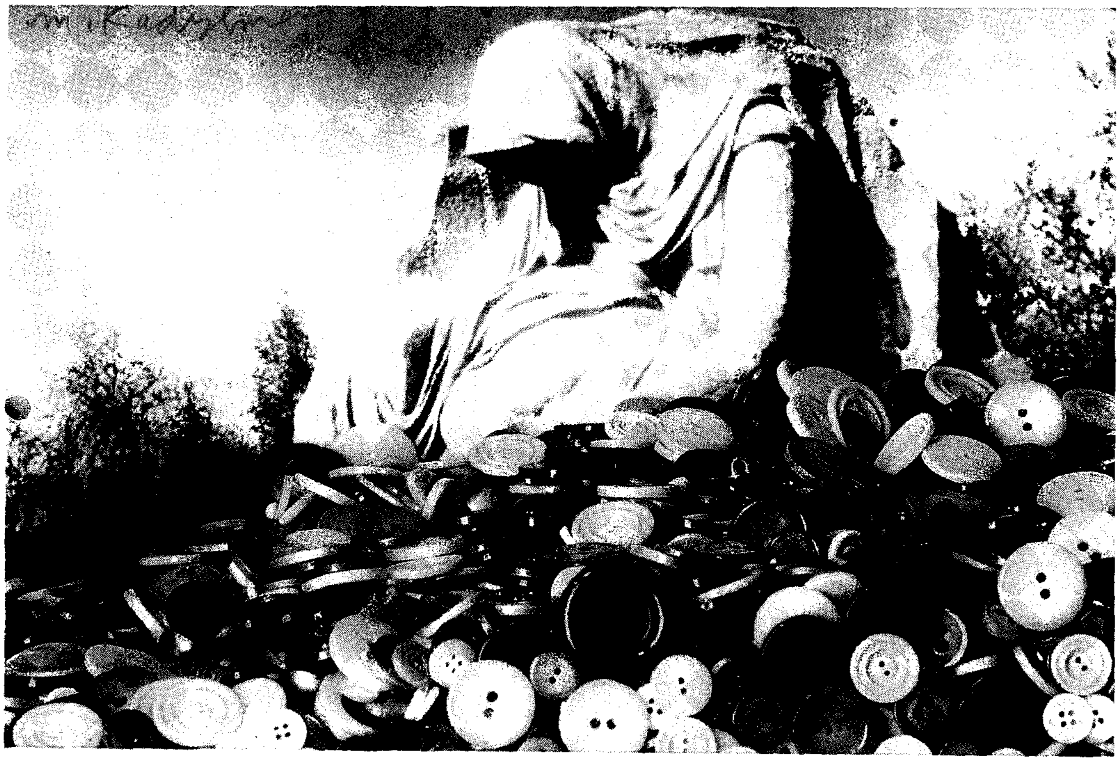


The playwright SERGEY SAMUSENKO *and the photographer* SERGEY GRIGORIEV, *having noticed the current lack of equestrian Lenins, propose to rectify the situation by placing him upon the steed of Peter the Great.*

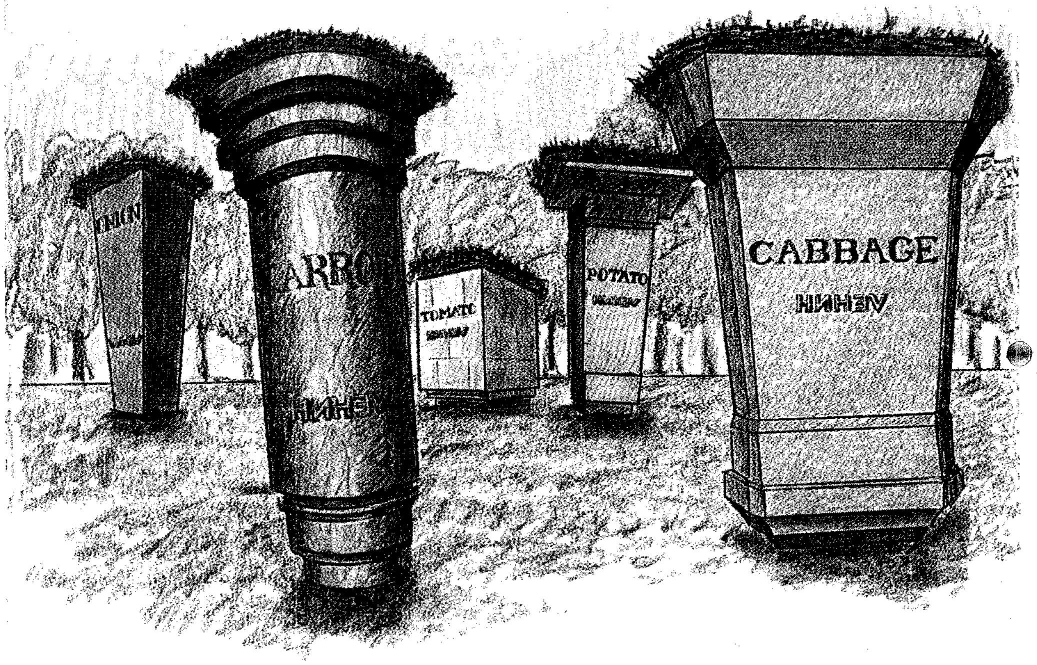




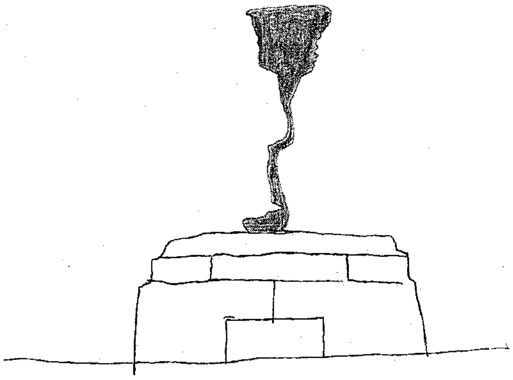
CONSTANTIN BOYM, *a Russian émigré now teaching at the Parsons School of Design, says that the only way to preserve monumental propaganda may be to turn it into monumental advertising, and suggests leasing the various Lenin statues to Western corporations, for "a hefty hard-currency fee, payable to the Russian government."*



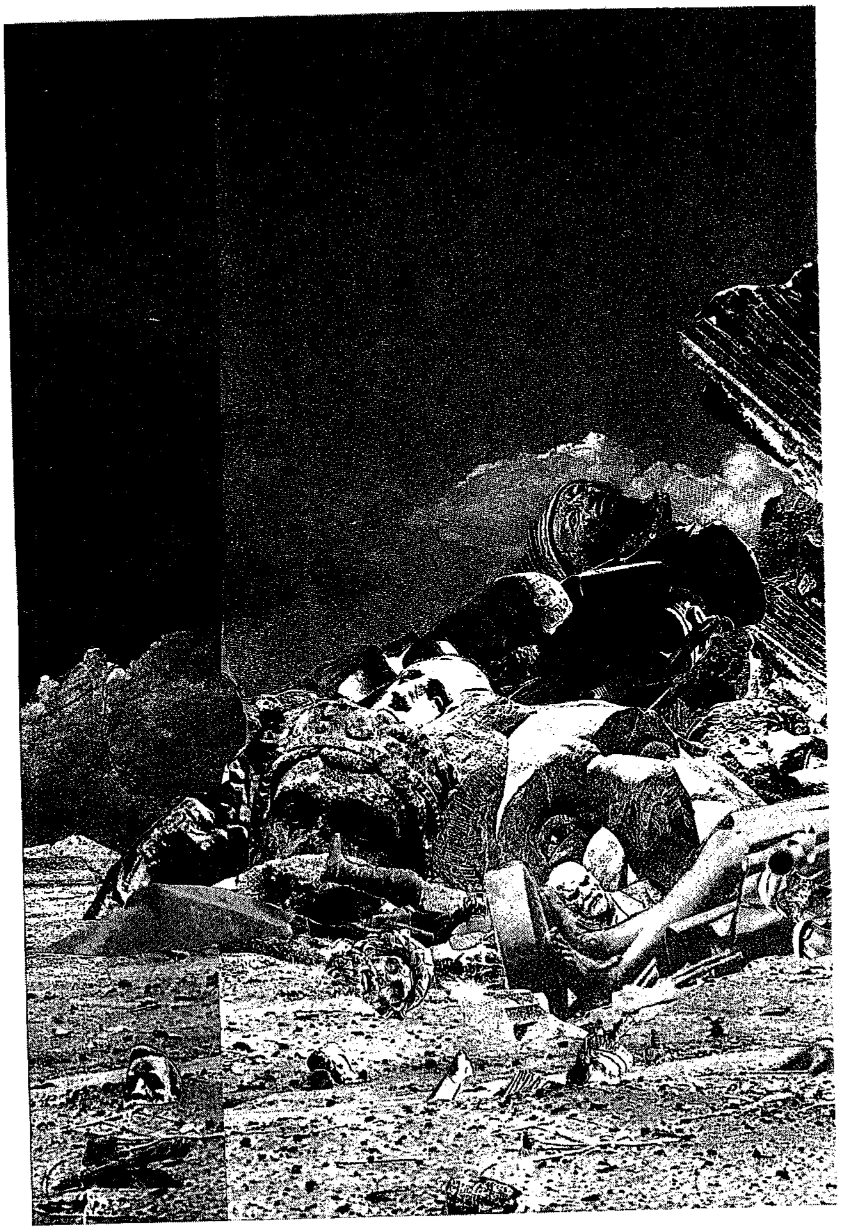
The Israeli artist MENASHE KADISHMAN *would take the haunting "Sorrow of the Motherland," from the Memorial to the Heroes of the Battle of Stalingrad, and make it more haunting still.*



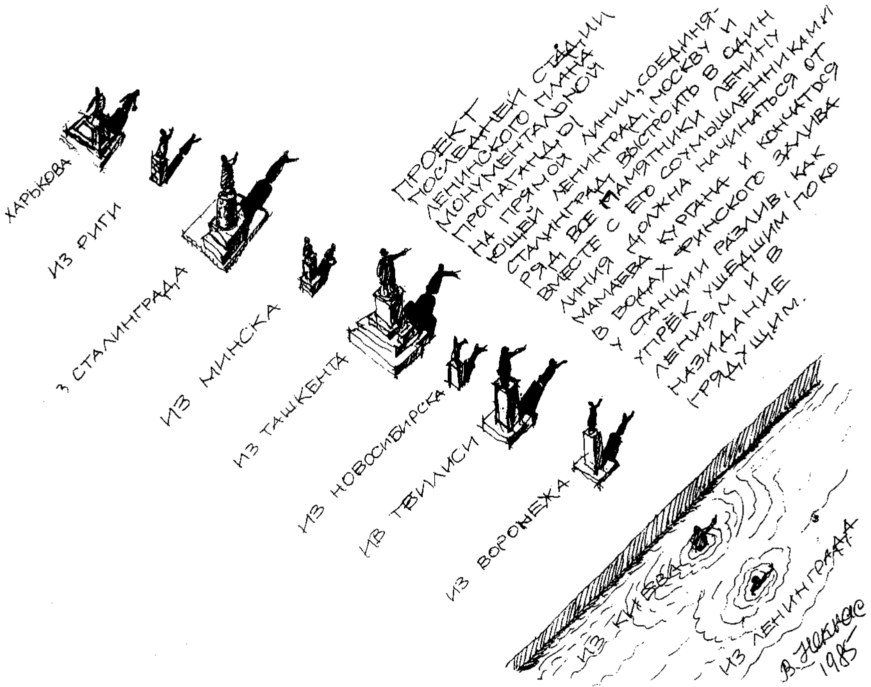
The French artist MICHEL GERARD *and the Russian poet* MARINA TEMKINA *propose taking a group of onetime pedestals, stripped of their statues, inverting them, and planting a variety of humble vegetables on their tops, in celebration of the "Post-Leninist Crop."*



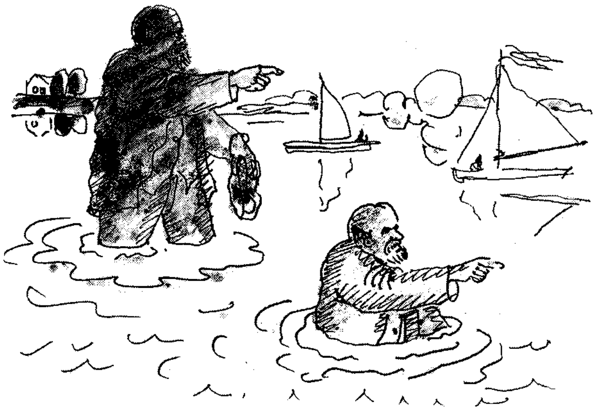
MAC ADAMS *would tear down the famous statue of Marx and Engels conversing, leaving in its place only the "dialectical space" between them.*

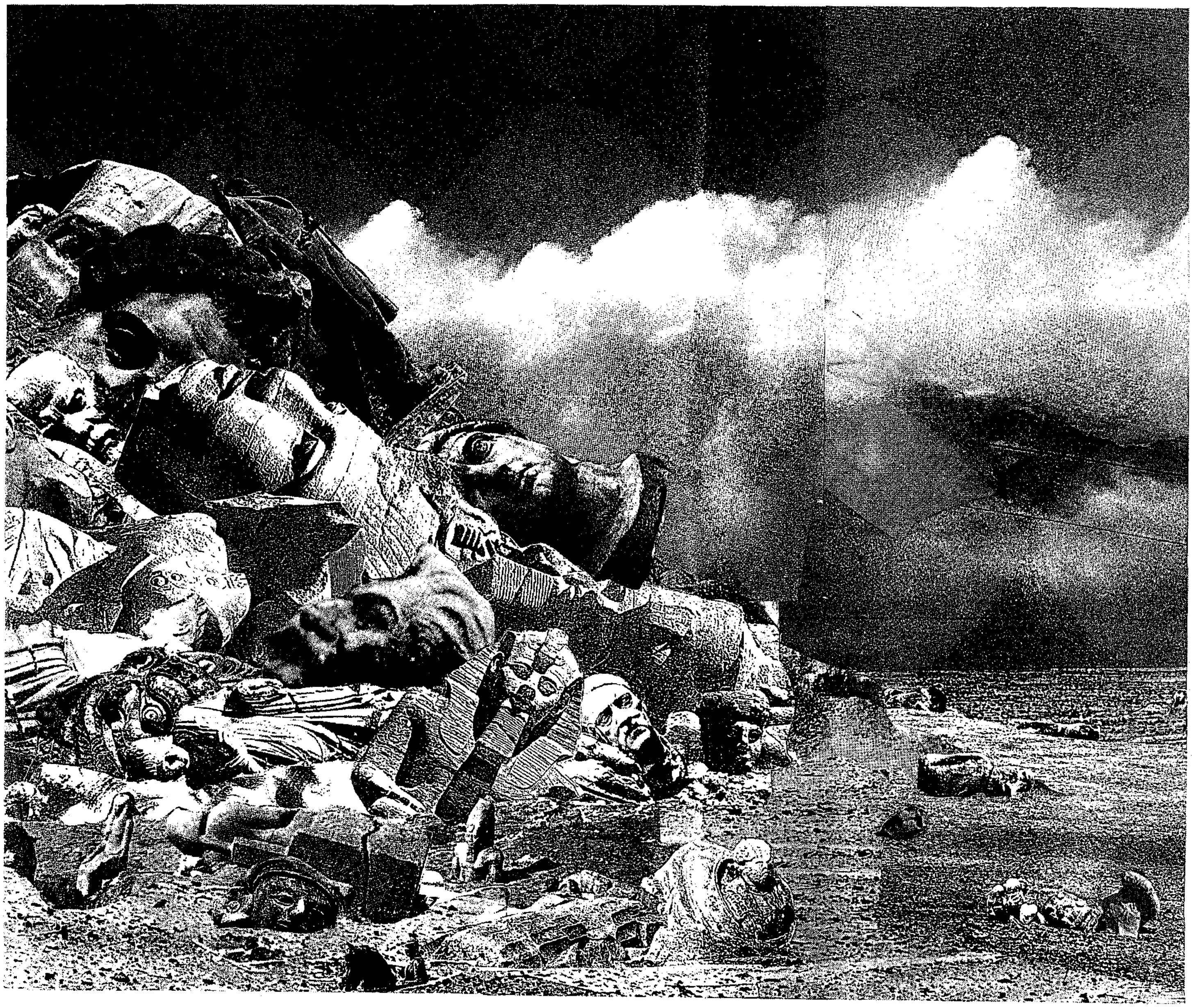


For a country with a history of erecting monuments and then tearing them down, MARK TANSEY *proposes a ziggurat of rubble—a monument that, by definition, could never be torn down.*


ПРОЕКТ ПОСЛЕДНЕЙ СТАДИИ ЛЕНИНСКОГО ПЛАНА МОНУМЕНТАЛЬНОЙ ПРОПАГАНДЫ
НА ПРЯМОЙ ЛИНИИ, СОЕДИНЯЮЩЕЙ ЛЕНИНГРАД, МОСКВУ И СТАЛИНГРАД ВЫСТРОИТЬ В ОДИН РЯД ВСЕ ПАМЯТНИКИ ЛЕНИНУ ВМЕСТЕ С ЕГО СОУМЫШЛЕННИКАМИ
ЛИНИЯ ДОЛЖНА НАЧИНАТЬСЯ ОТ МАМАЕВА КУРГАНА И КОНЧАТЬСЯ В ВОДАХ ФИНСКОГО ЗАЛИВА У СТАНЦИИ РАЗЛИВ, КАК УПРЁК УШЕДШИМ ПОКОЛЕНИЯМ И В НАЗИДАНИЕ ГРЯДУЩИМ.
ХАРЬКОВА
ИЗ РИГИ
з СТАЛИНГРАДА
ИЗ МИНСКА
ИЗ ТАШКЕНТА
ИЗ НОВОСИБИРСКА
ИЗ ТБИЛИСИ
ИЗ ВОРОНЕЖА
ИЗ КИЕВА
ИЗ ЛЕНИНГРАДА
В. Некрасов 1985

VLADIMIR NEKRASOV, a Russian-émigré artist now living in Brooklyn, suggests taking all the remaining statues and spacing them out evenly in a straight line running from the former Stalingrad, through Moscow and the former Leningrad, and on out into the Gulf of Finland, thus "expelling Communism back to the West, from whence it came."





FICTION

HEAVY LIFTING

BY RALPH LOMBREGLIA

Vernon DeCloud's video belongs to a sales subgenre that Dwight and Anita, my media mentors, call "Brie TV," because such tapes are almost always shown during lavish cocktail parties. Brie TV is basically expensive P.R. for luring investors to large business ventures. In these parlous times it has become a Paradise Productions specialty. The budgets are big, your client takes all the risk, and you get to do fun things like helicopter shots, computer animation, and hanging out with the blown away but still famous enough actor you've hired to narrate it. Then your client stages a gala function, the guests graze and drink, you roll the tape. If the potential investors come away feeling they've just seen the client's venture on the nightly news, you're aces.

The problem this time . . . Well, there are many problems, but for starters the client's venture is not taking place on the planet Earth, so we're targeting a special breed of investor. Besides that, investment videos are, by their very nature, slick salesmanship, yet Vernon DeCloud instructed us that slick salesmanship was all wrong. "We're asking people to join the most monumental undertaking of all time," he declared when we began the project. "The greatest expedition ever conceived by humankind. We're going to make it sound like Boston Harborfront condominiums?"—a snide reference to a recent Paradise Productions success. But the ultimate problem is that Vern is Mr. Venture Capital—the financier who helped launch the computer companies that turned Boston into Silicon Valley East—and he can change his mind about anything any time he feels like it.

In retrospect, we should have seen it coming; clients often start out wanting the wild, chancy, groundbreaking presentation, only to chicken out later on. Vern told us of his long-standing interest in Zen Buddhism, so we decided our angle would be capitalism crossed with Zen. Except we didn't exactly know what Zen was. We brainstormed for a couple of weeks, watched time-shifted episodes of "Star Trek: The Next Generation," sent out for a lot of sashimi. Then Dwight and Anita flew around the country interviewing astronauts and scientists while I stayed home writing mystical voice-over narration. Marco Tempesto, the laser-light artist, came up with some amazing computer simulations of outer space. And though it's a Paradise Productions policy to avoid client input whenever possible, Vern was invited to see several cuts along the way. He pronounced each of them fine. Anita called him daily for approval of every little tweak, and Vern was that soul-soothing thing: the happy, wealthy customer.

But yesterday, with no warning, Vernon DeCloud lost his nerve, which partly, but not completely, explains why Dwight woke me up at 5:50 A.M. today with a phone call to my girlfriend's apartment.

"I just had a terrible dream about Walter!" he exclaimed when Rebecca grabbed the receiver. "Is he O.K.? He's not dead, is he?"

She flopped over in bed to look. I was sleeping with my mouth open because I have a cold, and in the dim predawn light, with the suggestion of death in her groggy head, she took me for a corpse. She screamed. I sprang up like a zombie and she clobbered me with the phone.

"Walter, you're alive!" Dwight said when I got on. "I looked for you an hour ago, and you weren't there." He was calling from the main editing suite at Paradise Productions, directly above the first-floor apartment I sublet from them.

"That's because I'm here, Dwight."

"Then I fell asleep and had this awful dream. I dreamed you died, Walter."

Rebecca peeked out from under the comforter. "Dwight dreamed I died," I told her. She put a pillow over her head and laughed, or at least her body quaked like a person laughing. "Dwight, I'm not dying. I'm just moving in with my girlfriend."

"You're doing it?" Dwight said. "You've decided? You're leaving us, Walter?"

"Well, I mean, that's the issue. No, I haven't decided. But you'd still see me every day. Unless I'm fired." After I moved in below their studios, Dwight and Anita inducted me into the video business. Then Anita decided she liked me enough to fix me up with Rebecca, her old filmmaking friend. When you rent an apartment, you don't usually think that you're getting a whole new life, but it happened to me. Now it was 6 A.M., the time when Rebecca's clock radio goes off. The man in the helicopter came on. "Dwight, why were you looking for me at five in the morning?"

"So we could work on Vern's tape, what else? We got you big-time money to write this script, and now in the clutch you're not there. What if Watson had been shacked up when Alexander Graham Bell called *him*? We wouldn't even have the telephone today."

"You haven't been to bed, have you?"

"I fell asleep with my head on the tape controller, and I had that dream. My face has all these marks on it."

"Why do you do this to yourself, Dwight? Why do you work this way? Is it because this is the only way the poetry happens?"

"It's because Vern has rejected our video, Walter."

"Nonsense, Dwight. He loves it."

"No, he called yesterday to say it's too weird for the big investors. They're not gonna get it. It has to be real straight and obvious, and no politics or philosophy. I couldn't talk him out of it. Didn't Anita tell you?"

"No."

"We have to do something about our communication in this company," Dwight said. "Walter! Come here! I need you!"

I met Vernon DeCloud several months ago during an Indian lunch in the town of Waltham—a topological oddity that seems to abut or actually contain every other town in the Boston area; whenever people give you directions to somewhere, they ask if you're coming from Waltham. Much of the unseen technological life of the Northeast takes place there, in long, low-lying buildings with black slits for windows or with no windows at all. Vernon DeCloud's offices are somewhere in those miles of industrial park where asphalt seeks its own level like marshland. But for this meeting he'd summoned us to Taste of Calcutta—Dwight and Anita, their partner the Doctor, Tempesto, and me. Tempesto got Paradise Productions this gig in the first place; he goes way back with Vern. Dwight insists that the Doctor attend all meetings, because his Harvard Ph.D. comforts clients. I'm never invited to meetings, or even informed they've taken place. I had no idea what this project was about. But Vern had insisted that the proposed scriptwriter be there. All the magic begins with the writer, he told Anita. Obviously, he was no ordinary client.

"I've seen your demo reel," Vern said once I'd shaken his hand and sat down. "Very competent, very professional."

"Thank you, sir."

"Don't call me 'sir,' Walter. That was the problem with your reel. Respectful, safe, boring."

"Oh."

"But I sensed something more—some greatness within you that wasn't being expressed. I understand you're an actor. You've done Shakespeare."

"Right."

"The greatest dramatic mind of all time," said Vern, "and you've strutted his words upon the stage! That's what we're looking for, Walter. The human soul in flight!"

"I see."

"Don't say you see if you don't see."

"I think I see."

"All right. Now, you may not be aware of it, but there's a whole subculture of people, heavy scientists included, who are thoroughly disgusted with the way our government has botched space exploration."

"We don't even *have* space exploration!" Tempesto exclaimed across the table. "Remember how you felt in the Mercury days? Remember Apollo? We were like gods! Now we just fly around in that glorified airplane. We could have been on Venus already!"

"My daughter's a sophomore in college," Vern said, "and she doesn't believe men really walked on the moon. She thinks it was actors on a set."

"We're not leaving our descendants any great mythic frontier," the Doctor said.

"The point being," I said, "that these alienated space people want to blast off on their own."

"Right," said Vern. "And they know how. They have a detailed ten-year plan, starting with a space station, and then a colony on the moon, and finally a city on Mars."

"A Martian city in ten years, Walter!" the Doctor said.

"The government's gonna let you do all this?"

"Our government wants out of the space business," said Vern. "They don't know how to run a business. They can't even deliver the mail right anymore. They'd like nothing better than to get NASA's budget back, but they don't know how to extricate themselves. Someone has to help them."

"Isn't this the coolest thing you've ever heard?" Anita asked me.

Fragrant, steaming dishes of food arrived. "How about it, Walter?" said Vern. "Are you psyched? We only want people who are psyched."

"He's psyched," said Dwight. "His rate is three hundred a day."

Mr. Venture Capital reached across the table to shake my hand, and then served himself some *basmati* rice.

"Thanks, pal!" I whispered to Dwight.

"You get one-fifty," he whispered back.

The lamb vindaloo came around to me, and its fumes cleared my head. "Stupid question," I said. "How are you planning to get up there?"

"Hardly stupid, Walter," said Vern. "Of the essence. Marco?"

"You know how they keep telling us the Cold War is over?" Tempesto said. "Well, thousands of missiles are sitting in silos, ready to go, and the most imagination our leaders can muster is to dismantle the things. After they bled us for the taxes to build them! This government kills me! There's your heavy lifting."

"Those aren't for going into space, Tempesto. They fly sideways."

"We change their trajectories, Walter."

"They'll reach that far?"

"Far enough for the space station, which is our staging area for the lunar colony."

I turned to Vern. "What's the lure for these investors you're trying to round up? What do they get? The chance to send up their experiments? Find out if their macaroni-and-cheese works in the weightlessness of space?"

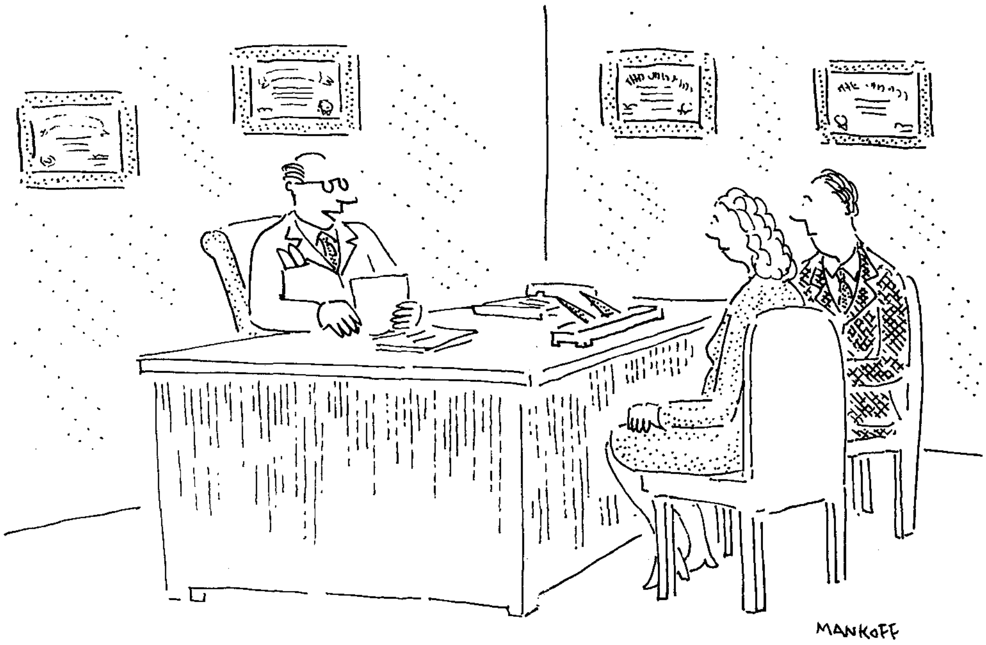
"We'll put in some boring short-term stuff for them," Vern said. "Most investors aren't philosophers, are they? But before money, there's existence. Before existence, survival. That's the other part of the picture."

"The other part."

"The exodus, Walter. Look around you, my friend. No, not the restaurant. The world. Don't you see what's going on? I know it's hard to contemplate, but let's face facts. Sooner or later, we must leave this planet."

I glanced at my colleagues. This wasn't news to them, apparently. "Everybody?"

Vern slapped the table. "Excellent! He



"The amnio's fine, the sex is male, and the name is Wade."

pierces to the crux! No, not everybody. Everybody won't be able to, though I'm afraid in the end everybody will want to. I'm not surprised you haven't thought about it. Most people haven't. Most people have been brainwashed into a deadly lethargy. But let me assure you, you'll think about it soon enough. It's going to get pretty slimy down here before long."

"Pollution?" I said.

"No, Walter," said Vern. "Class warfare."

I RESIGNED in Dwight's Bonneville on the way back to Paradise Productions. That is, I tendered my resignation verbally. It was not accepted.

"*Now* what's the problem?" Dwight said, looking at me in the rearview mirror.

"This guy is one bizarre Republican and you know it, Dwight."

"What do you mean?" said Tempesto from the passenger seat. "Vern's a great guy."

"Yeah, a great guy who wants to privatize outer space for himself and his rich pals, and leave everybody else to rot on the doomed planet."

"He never said that," Anita said.

"He's a kook, Anita. He wants to fly into outer space with military-surplus war missiles."

"Perfectly feasible," Tempesto said. "Great idea."

"What's next? Gaffer's tape? Parts from Radio Shack?"

"Never mind gaffer's tape!" the Doctor said. "What an epic moment in human history this is. Think of it, Walter. People leaving their birth planet! Extending human life into the heavens!"

"Without me."

"But Vernon *wants* you," Anita said. "You auditioned and got the job."

"Vern's touchy about personalities," Tempesto said. "He has mystical ideas about teams. A team is a very specific group of people."

"A genius financier personally tapped you as scriptwriter," Dwight said.

"Then why don't I get the three hundred?"

"You can have two. That's good money, Walter. Twice your usual rate."

"I want the whole three."

"Walter, when an employer quotes a rate on a subcontractor, it includes all kinds of hidden expenses. We have to pay all your benefits—your health, unemployment, Social Security, pension and welfare."

"You pay all that on me?"

"Starting now," Anita said.

DRY GROUND

Summer deepens and a root reaches for receding
water with a sense of waking long afterward
long after the main event whatever it was
has faded out like the sounds of a procession
like April like the age of dew like the beginning
the dry grass dying keeps making the sounds of rain
to hollow air while the wheat whitens in the cracked fields
and they keep taking the cows farther up into the woods
to dwindling pools under the oaks and even there
the brown leaves are closing their thin hands and falling
and out on the naked barrens where the light shakes
in a fever without a surface and the parched shriek
of the cicadas climbs with the sun the bats
cling to themselves in crevices out of the light
and under stone roofs those who live watching the grapes
like foxes stare out over the plowed white stones
and see in all the hueless blaze of the day nothing
but rows of withered arms holding up the green grapes

—W. S. MERWIN

Back at Paradise Productions, Dwight and the Doctor sat me down in the coffee lounge. "Don't you watch 'MacNeil/Lehrer'?" Dwight said. "We're in the middle of this very weird reversal. American capitalism is a pitiful, retarded giant nobody wants to be seen with. Our businessmen want to be anything but who they are. They want to be like the witty Germans, the stylish Italians, the swashbuckling Aussies."

"They'd be African," the Doctor said, "if you told them that was the coming thing."

"But more than anything else," Dwight continued, "they want to be Japanese. They want to *think* Japanese, but they have no idea what that is. They talk about being hip and radical and cutting edge, but it sounds like something on a Civil Service exam. It's bizarre, Walter, but we're at the point now where investors are actually *afraid* of ideas that make sense to them. If they understand a business deal, that's terrifying, because everything they understand is wrong. Right off the bat, they're not thinking Japanese. But if they don't understand it, that's terrifying, too, because maybe it's just freaky bullshit. How would you describe a situation like that?"

"Pathetic?"

"No! Fluid! It's a fluid situation. We've talked about those. What happens in fluid situations?"

"Us little piggies have roast beef?"

"Yes, Walter!"

DWIGHT JR.'S day-care provider is indisposed today, so the little guy is here in the editing suite with Anita and me, helping us with our crisis. Dwight Sr. is supposed to be here, too, but he was spirited away by Tempesto, who's catering the banquet tonight at the Cambridge Marriott, where we're showing God knows what version of Vern's video to an audience of space freaks and skeptical millionaires. We've spent the morning staring at Dwight's all-night samurai recut—talking heads answering questions no one has asked, narration that doesn't go with the pictures, ten-second black holes, all in the structure, more or less, of our Harborfront condominium video. When he left, Dwight told us to fill in the holes and polish it up.

"You know what?" Anita says. "I don't want to do this anymore. I quit."

"You can't quit. You're the producer."

She takes a small video camera from a shelf and points it at me. The red light starts blinking. "Tell me how you feel about moving in with Rebecca," she says.

"Da!" says Dwight Jr.

"See that?" Anita says. "He sees the camera and says 'Da.' Is that adorable or what?"

"Da" is Dwight Jr.'s name for Dwight Sr., and his first intelligible word, at ten months of age. The elder Dwight is predictably proud, but he's also a great believer in the perfectibility of man, and feels there's room for improvement. He's been playing Bob Marley albums non-stop at home, trying to get Dwight Jr. to change it to "Jah"—God's Rastafarian name. Dwight believes that children need a strong transcendental figure early in life, and what better choice than Dad? "If you can do 'Da,' 'Jah' should be easy, right?" he asked me the other day. " 'Jah' should be a pretty small step, don't you think?"

One small step for Dwight Jr. One giant leap for Da.

"Anita, could you turn that off?"

"People pay good money for this, Walter. Video therapy. You talk about your problems on camera, and it helps you work through them."

"It's not helping me. It's making me upset."

Dwight Jr. stands on my lap with his killer Stride-Rites, then flings his head back and swooshes down the front of me, pretending I'm a slide. He hits the floor with a squeal and climbs back up to do it again.

"You're an actor, you can't get nervous in front of cameras. Plus, therapy doesn't always feel better at first. Lots of times it feels crummy for quite a while. So what about moving in with Rebecca?"

"First of all, I might not do it. I'm leaning against it, in fact."

"Don't listen to Dwight, Walter. He acts so hardboiled, but deep down he's incredibly romantic."

"Really. What about Tempesto and the Doctor? They're against it, too."

"Tempesto and the Doctor. Men who think women should be dragged around by their hair."

I was eating dinner at Rebecca's a few weeks ago, when out of the blue she said, "Isn't it about time you moved in?" The tableau shimmers in my mind like one of Tempesto's holograms: the oaky Chardonnay like gold in my upraised glass, Rebecca's homemade chicken pie on my palate, Rebecca herself across the table, with her dark hair in a red ribbon and her steaming fork poised in the air. "Moved in what?" I replied innocently.

"Moved in *here*," she said, her eyes hard and moist. "*Moved in with me.*"

For some reason, I suddenly remembered the story of a famous jazz critic who suggested that Miles Davis drop by the next time he was in the critic's neighborhood. "What for?" Miles reportedly said. "What for?" I blurted to Rebecca.

It took a night and a day to make up with her, and then I negotiated for more time, and sometime after that I mentioned the episode to Anita—seeking, I suppose, impartial womanly guidance, though what could I have been thinking?—and soon people were stopping me in the hallways of Paradise Productions to clap me on the shoulder and say, "Things are getting serious, Walter!"

Not Dwight, however. He's opposed to it. Men shouldn't do things like move in with women, he told me. Men have their freedom to think about.

"Freedom to do what?" I asked.

"To sleep with other women, for one thing."

"Dwight, how could I do that?"

"Easy!"

"What else?" I asked, but he couldn't think of anything. Anita lets Dwight do whatever he wants except that one thing.

"Dwight, you yourself moved in with a woman," I pointed out.

"So?" he said.

Anita drops down on one knee for a different angle with the camera. Dwight Jr., the most videotaped child in history, hams it up by wrapping an arm around my neck and taking a bow as though we're doing some old biplane stunt.

"Anita, we're getting punchy. I'm gonna make fresh coffee."

"Just tell me your gut feelings. Not what everybody else says. Tell me what you, Walter, personally feel."

"I feel it's an awfully big step."

"But you want to do it."

"That's the problem."

"Talk about how you feel with that cute little boy on your lap. Isn't he a doll? How would you like a little boy of your own?"

"I want a little girl."

"A girl! Wonderful! Tell me."

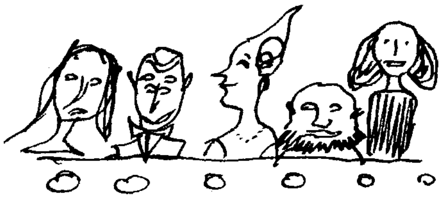
"Well, if I had a girl, I wouldn't have to get symbolically killed or kicked in the crotch all the time. She'd worship me and love me forever."

"No, eventually she'd nail you."

"You think?"

"It's part of human development. Dada gets it in the coconuts."

The receptionist's voice comes over the intercom. "*Dwight for Anita on three. Anita, pick up three.*"



Anita punches the button for the speakerphone. "Where the hell are you?" she says at her husband, but it's Tempesto's voice that comes out.

"*Captain's Log, Stardate four thousand two hundred seventeen. We have established contact with the space colony. But something has gone terribly wrong. The men are no longer in charge. The slave women have taken over.*"

"Yay!" Anita says at the phone.

Dwight's voice comes on. "*Anita? What's going on? Where's Walter?*"

"We're doing video therapy. I'm taping Walter talking about moving in with Rebecca. We're getting some really great, heartfelt stuff. His anxiety level is dropping dramatically."

"*I happen to know Walter has decided against that. Nothing personal about Rebecca. Lovely girl. But Walter needs to be near his work.*"

"When did I say that?"

"*Is that you, Walter? Your voice sounds funny.*"

"Your son has his finger up my nose."

"*Well, take it out. Hi, Dwight Junior. It's Jah speaking. Jah.*"

"I never said I decided, Dwight."

"*You said words to that effect.*"

"I said I couldn't make up my mind."

"*That's not how it sounded to me. What kind of shape is the tape in?*"

"The way you left it," I say. "The sound of outer space clapping."

"*You haven't done* anything *to it?*"

"We have some ideas," Anita says.

"*Wonderful. Say goodbye to Walter and we'll talk about it.*"

"Dwight, no!" she says. "I need him!"

"*Well, we need some help over here, too.*"

"Help doing what?" I say.

"*Walter, bring little Dwight with you. Dwight Junior, leave Mommy alone now. Come to Jah.*"

The door swings open and the Doctor comes in. "Ready?" he asks me.

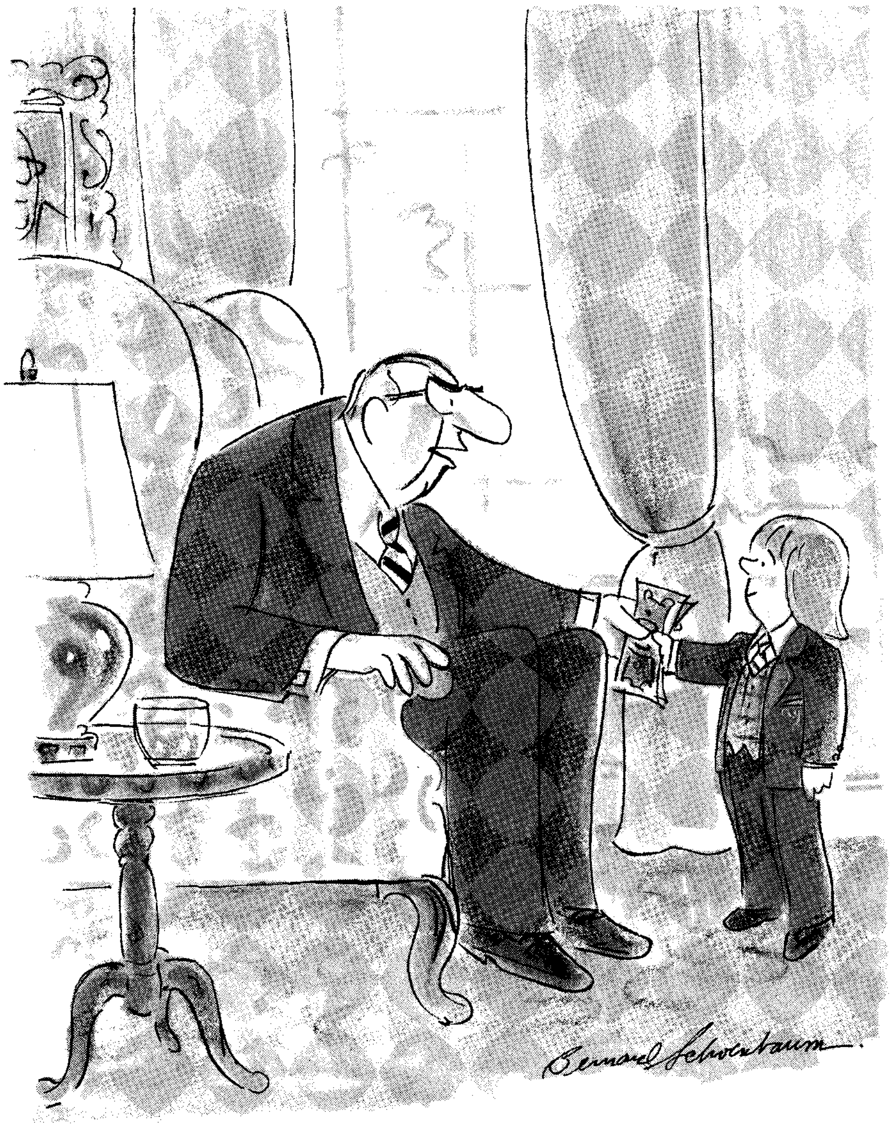
"Ready for what?"

"To venture into the field. Didn't Dwight call you?"

"*Yes, I called him,*" says the speakerphone.

WHEN the Doctor got his Ph.D. in anthropology years ago, he was all set for a big academic career, and then he signed up to work for a summer on an ethnographic documentary. Somewhere out in the bush he went cinematically native. He's been in the film business ever since, where there's more raw anthro than in any tribal village. At some point in the Doctor's barefoot wanderings with the 16-mm., he was promised to a chieftain's daughter, and he's theoretically next in line to become king of an obscure South Pacific island. Among the principals of Paradise Productions, he is the most genuinely excited about Vernon DeCloud's delusions. The Doctor, it turns out, has some unfinished personal business with the academy, and Vern's project is how he plans to finish it—by becoming the first anthropologist to live in space, where he will undertake a trailblazing scholarly study of private-sector space cowboys, combined with documentaries for public TV and a two- or three-volume coffee-table-book tie-in.

The Doctor is also an amateur folk musician, and in this capacity he composed the anthem "Hardware Dude," theme song of Marco Tempesto's "Commando Cuisine," a weekly Paradise Productions cooking program for public-access cable TV. The show is taped in the Home Ec. labs of a local high school, to which the Doctor has now driven us in his bottle-green Austin-Healey. The taping is usually done on Thursday night, not Saturday afternoon, but since Tempesto was cooking anyway, he wanted to get a special episode out of it—catering the large banquet event. Dwight Jr. refuses to walk, so I'm riding him piggyback down the wide school hallway, spurred on by the Stride-Rites. My adolescence is flooding back to me. We pass countless padlocked student lockers filled, I presume, with weapons and drugs. "This is where you'll be spending your days, Dwight Junior," I say. He slaps the metal doors as we lumber by.



"Here, take this before Clinton gets his hands on it."

I've never been here, but the Doctor knows where he's going. He hangs a left and pushes open a set of double doors to reveal Tempesto, under movie lights, in the center of a vast lab room. He's standing at a worktable in an achingly white jumpsuit with "Commando Cuisine" stitched across his chest in glossy red script—the name of his catering service as well as of the program. He breaks eggs one-handed into a bowl and fluffs them with a whisk.

Dwight is behind the camera operator, directing. He sees us, and wheels over a stainless-steel table piled with large net bags of onions. Dwight Jr. climbs down my body to be with Da. "Have you ever had Tempesto's onion tart?" Dwight asks me. "No? You're in for a treat." He takes a whopping chef's knife from a wooden tableside holder, flicks its edge with his thumb, and hands it to me.

"I'm chopping onions instead of working on the video?"

"Sometimes the only thing to do is to leave Anita alone, and then she pulls it together. Plus, we have to think of the big picture. What if the video's a bust? We want plenty of good food, right?"

"Maybe Tempesto could do one of his laser light shows."

"Good thinking, Walter. We're going to get it right now. That's why you're taking over for us."

"This reminds me of a wonderful feast I once filmed in New Guinea," the Doctor says.

Tempesto beckons him over into the camera's view. "We have a world-renowned anthropologist in our studios today, ladies and gentlemen. Doctor, any little-known culinary lore you'd like to share with us?"

"Well, Marco, did you know that the natives of Coney Island have more than one hundred words for Sno-Kones?"

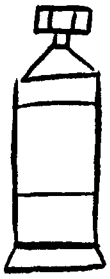
MARCO TEMPESTO got his start as Vernon DeCloud's technical wizard. Back in the days when Vern was doing his first big venture-capital deals, the young Tempesto was pulling cable through Vern's ceilings, installing phone systems, configuring computers, maintaining data bases. Tempesto even wrote software back then, though he won't type one line of code today. Language is a quagmire, he says. He works only on machines themselves now—machines and food, and then only if he's made them himself.

His real heart is in gargantuan visual art. Not the thousand-mile serpentine trenches you've seen in travel magazines, the ones requiring a bulldozer and a bullheaded grant recipient. Tempesto doesn't work with dirt. He doesn't work with brute force. He works with light. Though hardware is his mistress, Tempesto's deepest passion is for the immaterial—for things you can't take apart with a screw gun, things that don't really exist outside the concatenating powers of the mind. You wouldn't know it from the lather he can get into over gigabytes and megaflops, but the physical world for Tempesto is merely a doorway into the metaphysical.

More than anything, he would like to turn the nighttime sky into 3-D color TV. That would be the most incredible hack of all, he says, and he claims to know how to do it, but it would cost a lot of money, even for a few seconds, and so far the funding has been elusive. He pitched the idea to his old friend Vernon DeCloud—financing celestial television by selling some sky time for advertising—but though Vern would be perfectly happy to go down in history as the man who turned the stratosphere into a Coke commercial, he said no. Vern didn't believe Tempesto could do it. He thought it was just techie hand waving, and that's what hurt the most. In desperation, and though he considered it an ugly idea, Tempesto submitted a proposal for turning the new moon into a Gulf Oil sign. The Gulf people said his idea wouldn't work and sent it back.

Meanwhile, another laser artist beat him to a synthetic aurora borealis, and Tempesto still smarts over that, though by all reports it was less colorful and shorter-lived than his own would have been. And a holographic northern lights was pretty obvious, anyway. Tempesto envisions art videos viewable from one-third of the Earth's surface at a time. Why? For the transformation and unification of human consciousness.

TEMPESTO'S staff went to the Marriott in two panel trucks full of food and drink, leaving the Doctor and me to button things up in the laboratories of American culinary education. Dwight Jr. got to use the big boys' urinal in the high school bathroom, because it was the kind that goes all the way down to the floor, and that seemed to be the high point of his day, if not of his life. While the Doctor helped him, I washed my hands three times with the anti-bacterial soap from the pump dispenser, but they still smell like onions. My eyes continue to cry, too, here in the passenger seat of the Doctor's Lilliputian car, with Dwight Jr. sitting on my lap and the seat belt around the two of us.



We corkscrew down into the garage beneath the Marriott, where the Doctor unfurls himself from the Austin, lifts Dwight Jr. out, and then pulls me from the car like a vet birthing a calf. We ride a mahogany-lined elevator up a few flights, and when the doors slide open we're in a lobby with scores of people milling around, tags plastered to their shirts and jackets saying "Hello! My name is," followed by their names in red Magic Marker. A cloth banner spans a wall, saying, in two-foot-high letters, "WELCOME INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PRIVATE SPACE EXPLORATION."

We sidle around the edges of the crowd, me clutching Dwight Jr.'s jersey so he won't disappear. "There's a society for this?" I ask the Doctor. "Nobody told me that. I thought we were showing a tape to a bunch of investors."

"Yup. We're doing that."

"These are all people who think they're personally going to outer space."

"The investors are here, too. The society is a bunch of space-junkie anarchists who've been E-mailing each other for years and getting all charged up about the government. Vern just stepped in with the idea of organizing their first meeting and letting some money people see the talent and energy."

I bump into a paunchy guy in his thirties with a plastic cup of beer in his hand. He has that rumpled software-engineer look. "Where are you on this space stuff?" I ask him. "The bleachers or the field?"

"I'm on the first rocket off this ball of dirt!" he says.

"The field." I wink and give him the thumbs-up.

Soon we come to the entrance of the hotel cocktail lounge. "Karaoke!" says the Doctor, leading us inside. The dim bar is populated largely by men cheering one of their brothers onstage as he turns in a grisly rendition of "The Impossible Dream." There's a smattering of women with the same crazed-techie look in their eye as the guys have. But if they're drunk on space exploration or anything else, at least they're not singing about it.

"Da!" says Dwight Jr.

"You have to love karaoke," the Doctor says.

"No, I don't."

"Men never used to be able to do things like this in public."

"Those were the days."

I leave him to his study of lounge behavior, and carry Dwight Jr. up another flight to the grand ballroom. The dinner program doesn't begin for a half hour yet, but most of the tables are occupied by people snarfing appetizers and arguing about outer space beneath enormous chandeliers and three large mirrored disco balls that seem to be left over from the nineteen-seventies.

One nice thing about a big gig like this is that the video people get to bring a guest to the ball, and I see mine now at a table with Anita. When I get there, Dwight Jr. stops slapping my head and climbs into his mother's arms. Rebecca rises to kiss me. "You reek of onions!" she says.

"It's bad, isn't it? I can't get it off. Make sure you try the onion tart. I was a human sacrifice to it."

"Rebecca came over to Paradise to hang out with me," Anita says. "We worked on the tape together!"

"I helped find stuff to fill the holes," Rebecca says. "We had to lose a lot of your voice-over. Sorry."

"I hate voice-over anyway," Anita says.

"Then why do you always hire me to write it?" I ask.

"Oh, voice-over's important."

I chew on the logic of this, but my brain spits it out. "What did you think?" I ask Rebecca.

"Reminded me of the condominium one. Condominiums in outer space. Why did they need a video in the first place? They've got all these loonies in the flesh."

"Don't say that too loud," Anita says.

Tempesto's helpers have changed into their serving clothes, black slacks and blousy white T-shirts that say "Commando Cuisine" below a picture of a hungry-looking computer chip holding a knife and fork. They circulate with platters of spicy fried calamari, boiled Gulf shrimp, giant stuffed mushroom caps, baked Brie on baguette. The commando himself is working on the ballroom stage in a fresh white jumpsuit, hooking up his laser guns and racks of electronics gear.

Dwight materializes with a glass in his hand. "Cheers, Earthlings."

"What are you drinking?" Anita asks. "Give it to me."

"Vodka tonic. Nature's perfect beverage."

"Remember when they used to say that about eggs?" Anita says, taking a sip. "That eggs were nature's perfect food? They don't say that anymore."

"I think they might find out a few things about vodka tonics, too," Rebecca says.

"I'm getting mine in before they do," Dwight says.

I watch Vernon DeCloud schmooze around the ballroom, and in this way I figure out who some of the investors are. They're basically guys in expensive suits, human beings like you or me, except different. Vern arrives at our table and shakes everybody's hand.

"This is Rebecca!" Anita says. "Walter's moving in with her!"

"Well, I might be," I say, putting my arm around Rebecca's shoulders. "We're talking about it."

"Look before you leap," Vern says.

"Who are you telling that to?" Rebecca asks.

"Everybody!" Vern says. He looks apprehensive. "There's a billion dollars here looking for a place to park," he tells Dwight.

"They're gonna love it, Vern. Don't worry."

"I realize this was an unusual assignment," Vern says.

"No, it wasn't," Rebecca says. "They do all the outer-space people."

To his everlasting credit, Vern has a snort with us over this.

"Trust us," Dwight tells Vern. "We understand the mentality. We *are* the mentality."

We join a line to have our plates filled with Tempesto's stuffed loin of pork and piquant trimmings. My onion tart—I think of it as mine—seems to be a big hit as well; I suspect we have quite a few vegetarians on hand. In the minute or two that Dwight and I are alone, back at the table, I say, "You really think we're looking at class warfare down here, Dwight? I've been trying to decide if I'd want to bring a kid into this world."

"You see any haves giving their stuff to the have-nots?"

"Not exactly."

"Me, neither. On the other hand, there's always a chance our children will reject our rotten act and start living right. It's worth hoping for, I guess. If you had a kid, you'd probably move out of the house, though."

"Yeah, probably."

"I'd say hold off then."

When most people are well into the food and wine, Vern introduces the keynote speaker, a famous scientist who appears in our tape. Vern says not one word about class warfare or planetary exodus. He sticks to the usual stuff about capitalism on a new frontier, the rock-solid investment of it all. The scientist is well known for his desire to leave this planet, and his speech is easy to understand—Mars or bust. I observe the reaction of a few investors: they don't look too impressed. Tempesto's staff serves coffee and dessert—zabaglione for a group this large! Tempesto!—and then the room lights go dim, a large silver screen scrolls down the wall above the stage, and our tape begins to roll.

The new cut of the video is as predictable and dull as I-80 through Nebraska. True, extolling the glories of boldly going where no one has gone before would be preaching to the converted here, but the converted would have enjoyed a little preaching, and the investors would have enjoyed seeing them hoot and holler about it. Instead, it's all about commercial applications and short-term yields, things the space people think are stupid and which must look, to the investors, like the hand waving they see every day in their part of the world. All in all, we have succeeded in cryogenically freezing the whole audience by remote control. If I were in charge of this show, I'd say spoon out large second helpings of zabaglione to anybody wearing a good suit, but I'm not in charge, and the zabaglione's probably gone anyway. I look at Dwight. He holds up a finger to say *Wait.*

Suddenly the ballroom goes dark—the vast cavern of it absolutely black except for the red glow of the "Exit" lights at the edges. The whole room audibly draws a breath. Trance music starts to shimmer on the P.A. Then, just as suddenly, it's light again, but not the way it was before. Three bright-colored beams are shooting from Tempesto's laser guns, each of them hitting one of the now-spinning disco balls on the high ceiling. The open space between the balls goes luminous with the whirling, commingling refractions of the beams, and the resulting mishmash looks, at first, like the northern lights—a vague conglomeration of colored radiance suspended in the air. But soon shapes assert themselves in the welter of foggy colors, the shapes of a gigantic human face—an ear, a nose, a mouth with moving lips. The face has three-dimensional substance, but you can see through it, too. I hear startled cries from the tables around me, every conference-goer staring up in astonishment at the moving holographic visage. A disembodied woman's voice booms from the loudspeakers on the walls. "*Tell me how you feel about moving in with Rebecca*," the voice says.

"*I feel it's an awfully big step*," replies the enormous face in the air, and the amazed ballroom begins to laugh. My table is the only non-laughing one.

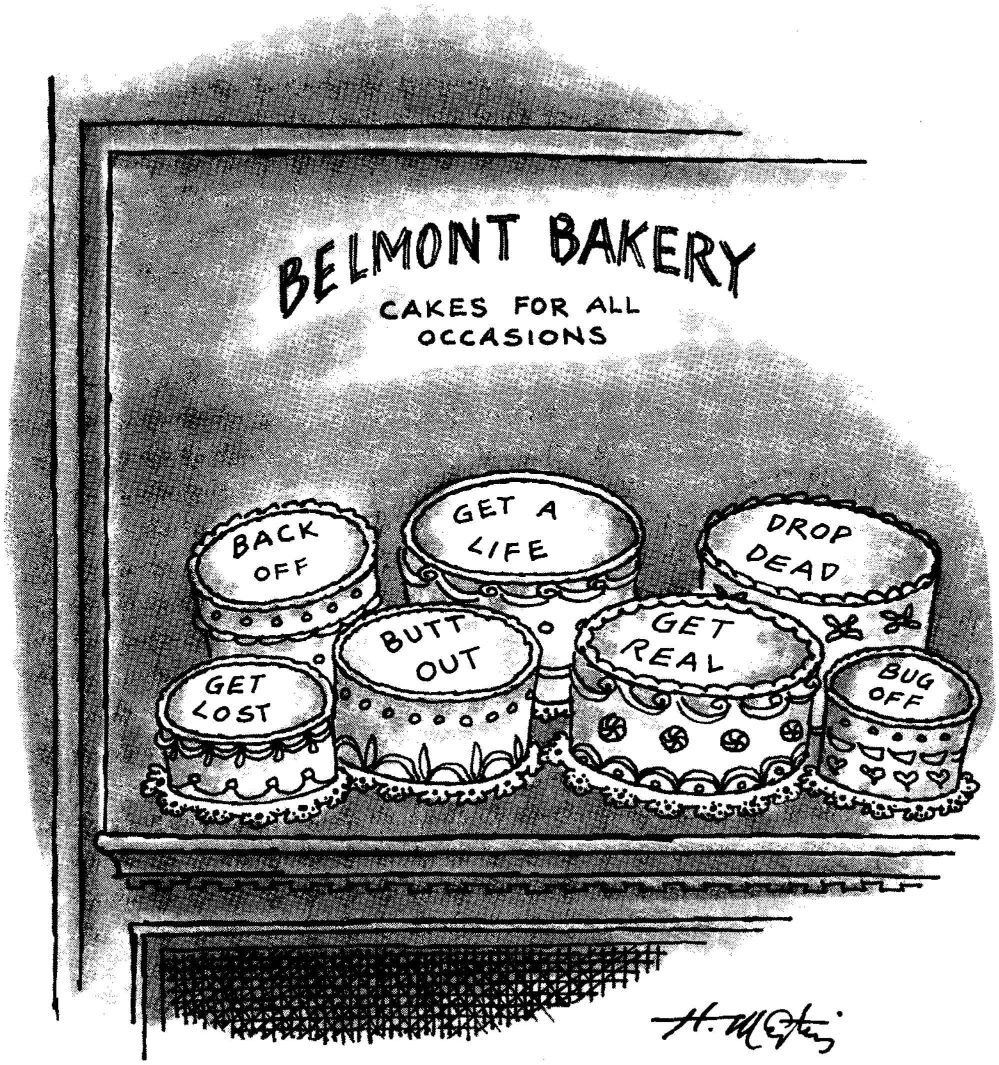
"What the hell is he doing up there?" Dwight croaks to Anita.

I stand up and stumble backward among the tables to get some distance from the unholy spirit-head hanging in the air above us. Goddamn if it's not me. "*I might not do it*," my giant face says. Then a humungous Dwight Jr. crawls into view and slides down the front of me, so palpably real that the audience cringes and covers its collective head.

"Da!" says Dwight Jr., pointing up at himself in the air.

This may sound odd coming from an actor, even one who scarcely acts anymore, but every time I see myself on tape, I wonder, Is this a man anyone would care about? Is this a person someone could love? And often I have my doubts. But not this time. This time I think I'm a knockout. Brando, De Niro, and Pacino put together never had a gig this good.

Tempesto arrives. He's laughing like



a person in shock. "Where's my moon animation!" he exclaims.

"This is supposed to be a low-altitude lunar fly-by!" Dwight says.

"I thought this was it!" says Anita. "Dwight Junior was playing with the cassettes before I gave them to Tempesto! This is something I was doing as a wedding present!"

"What wedding?" I say.

"*I want a little girl*," my monstrous mouth declares, a gleaming chandelier between my translucent teeth. "*If I had a girl, she'd worship me and love me forever.*"

I look around and see that it hardly matters what tape is playing. It could be anything up there. The audience is reeling with technique, the pure technique of an outlandish trick, for Tempesto has succeeded where all others have failed—he has somehow projected real-time full-motion video into a massive hologram floating in open air. He leaps onto the stage, his hands clasped in victory above his jumpsuited form. Here in the very birthplace of astounding hardware hacks, surrounded by the buildings of M.I.T., a ballroom's worth of technology junkies is giving him a standing ovation. "This is only a demo!" he screams to the convention. "I can do this in the sky! A whole continent at a time! All I need is some up-front capital!"

The investors are on their feet in ecstasy. If this isn't thinking Japanese, they don't know what is. They've got Sony by the short ones now. Vernon DeCloud appears onstage. "Let's hear it for Marco Tempesto!" he shouts into the microphone. "Five minutes of paid ads in the sky every night and we can go looking for other solar systems!"

The crowd goes wild, and then a woman's voice says over the loudspeakers, "*What's the problem with men, anyway?*" When I look up, Rebecca's giant 3-D face has replaced mine in the air. "*What's the big deal about living together?*" her hologram goes on. "*He's at my place every night anyway.*"

It looks amazingly like her, and it's strangely enchanting to experience her features thirty feet tall. That's her smile exactly, big as a queen-size bed. Her eyes are really pools. Those dark, curly cables are the hairs on her head. I've never seen her in detail like this.

Here on the ground, she's out of her chair and standing beside me, our mortal faces turned up to the numina we've become.

"It's them!" somebody exclaims. "They're here! The guy and the girl!"

The audience wheels around to look at us.

"Move in with her, you bum!" somebody shouts.

"He's not a bum!" Rebecca says.

"You're too good for him, sweetheart!" a man calls out.

"He doesn't look that bad to me," a woman says.

Anita stands on her chair and cups her hands around her mouth. "Let's put it to a vote! Should they move in together?"

The ayes come in like Niagara Falls.

"*I can't help it*," Rebecca's tremendous mouth is saying. "*I love the big dope. I know we'd be happy*," and suddenly I realize that I'm nuts about this monumental woman. And another thing: with her face as big as it is, she looks a lot like my mom.

"Jah!" cries a little voice nearby. Dwight Jr. is jumping on his father's lap and waving at Rebecca's face above us.

I turn to my flesh-and-blood girlfriend. "All right, I'll move in!"

"You will?" she exclaims, and then she leaps into my arms. I stagger around, trying to find my balance beneath her weight. The ovation from the ballroom is deafening. I have the idea that I'm a rocket shuddering with its payload on a pad, that the sound I'm hearing is my own incredible motor. In my eccentric circuit of the floor, I catch a blurry glimpse of Tempesto surrounded by men in expensive suits. The Doctor is flashing us with the strobe of his Nikon. We're going down in anthropology. Finally I stabilize and come to a teetering halt beneath the unearthly glow of the first-ever demonstration of celestial TV. "Now what do I do?" I gasp to Rebecca.

"Fly me to the moon." ♦

A CRITIC AT LARGE

DON JUAN IN HULL

Andrew Motion's biography of the late Philip Larkin has fuelled controversy over the poet's political incorrectness. But is it fair?

BY MARTIN AMIS

WHEN poets die, there is usually a rush to judgment: a revaluation, a retaliation—a reaction, anyway. We know how these things go, with the poets. He who was praised and popular is suddenly found to be facile and frictionless. He who was mocked and much remaindered is suddenly found to be "strangely" neglected. In 1985, the year of his death, Philip Larkin was unquestionably England's unofficial laureate, our best-loved poet since the war: better loved, qua poet, than John Betjeman, who was loved also for his charm, his famous giggle, his patrician bohemianism, and his televisual charisma, all of which Larkin notably lacked. Now, in 1993, Larkin is something like a pariah, or an untouchable. He who was beautiful is suddenly found to be ugly.

The word "Larkinesque" used to evoke the wistful, the provincial, the crepuscular, the sad, the unloved; now it evokes the scabrous and the supremacist. The word "Larkinism" used to stand for a certain sort of staid, decent, wary Englishness; now it refers to the articulate far right. In the early eighties, the common mind imagined Larkin as a reclusive yet twinkly drudge—bald, bespectacled, bicycle-clipped, slumped in a shabby library gaslit against the dusk. In the early nineties, we see a fuddled Scrooge and bigot, his singlet-clad form barely visible through a mephitis of alcohol, anality, and spank magazines. The reaction against Larkin has been unprecedentedly violent, as well as unprecedentedly hypocritical, tendentious, and smug. Its energy does not—could not—derive from literature: it derives from ideology, or from the vaguer promptings of a new ethos. In a sense, none of this matters, because only the poems matter. But the spectacle holds the attention. This is critical revisionism in an eye-catching new outfit. The reaction, like most reactions, is just an overreaction. To get an overreaction, you need plenty of overreactors. Somebody has to do it. And here they all are, busy overreacting.

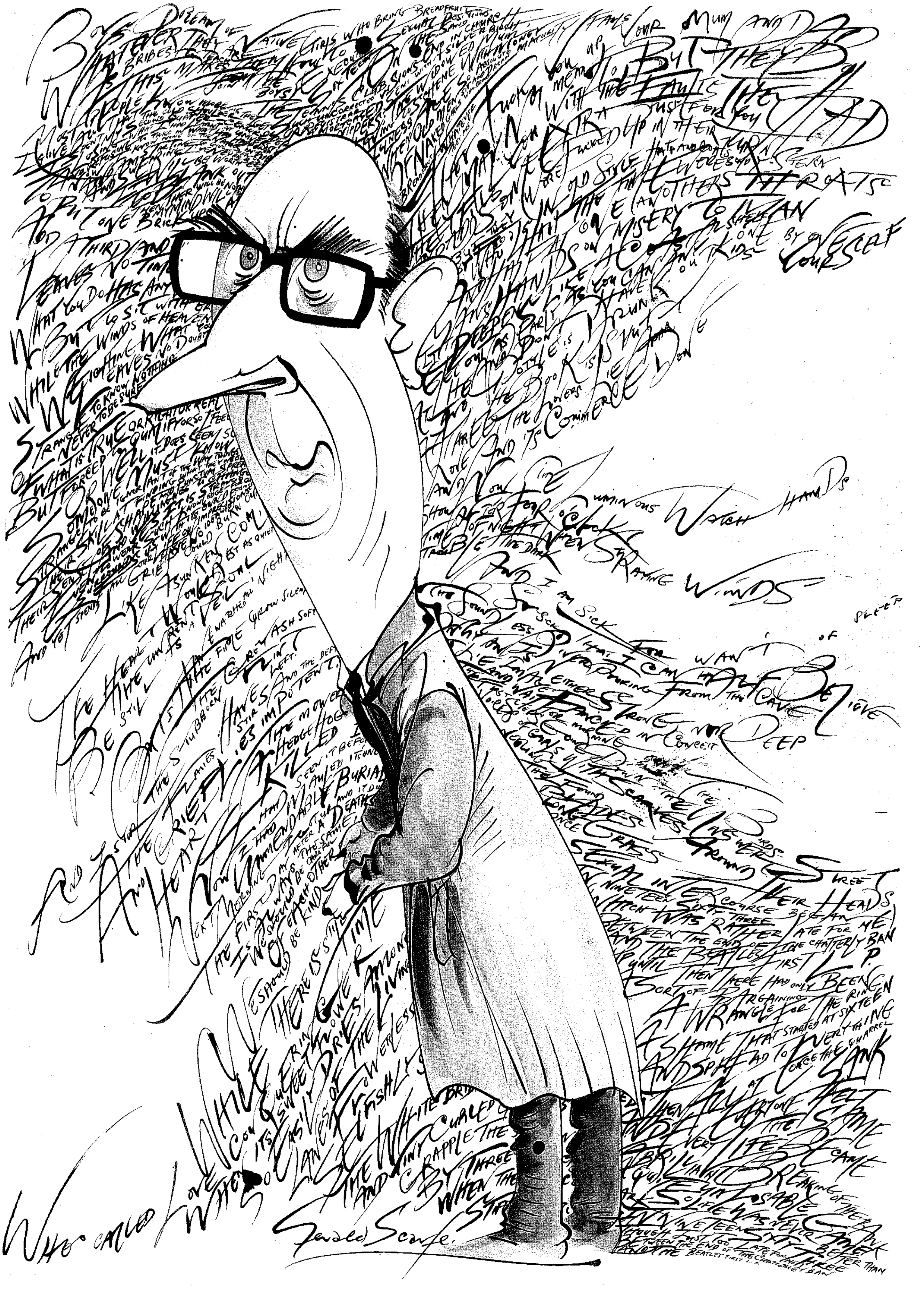
There are those who believe that the trouble began with the "Collected Poems," in 1988. Its editor, Anthony Thwaite, who also edited Larkin's "Selected Letters," decided not to segregate the published poems from the unpublished. So instead of the three volumes of clearly finished work—"The Less Deceived" (1955), "The Whitsun Weddings" (1964), and "High Windows" (1974)—with all the other stuff tucked away at the back, we get a looser and more promiscuous corpus, containing squibs and snippets, rambling failures later abandoned, lecherous doggerel, and confessional curiosities like the frightening late poem "Love Again":

> Love again: wanking at ten past three
> (Surely he's taken her home by now?),
> The bedroom hot as a bakery,
> The drink gone dead, without
> showing how
> To meet tomorrow, and afterwards,
> And the usual pain, like dysentery.
>
> Someone else feeling her breasts and
> cunt,
> Someone else drowned in that lash-
> wide stare . . .

You could say that the editorial decision had a clouding effect on the poems. You could even argue that it went against Larkin's spirit. Larkin left a lot of good things out. His œuvre (like his taste) was narrow, but it was crystallized; he could circle around a poem for years, in drafts, before completing or rejecting it. In any event, Larkin the man had started to look a little stranger. The "Collected Poems" didn't open him to attack. But it might have softened him up.

The frontal assault began in the autumn of 1992, with the English publication of the "Selected Letters" (to be published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux later this year). The charge was led by Tom Paulin, who is well known, in the U.K., for his literary criticism, his poetry, his controversialism, and his small-screen losses of temper. In the correspondence columns of the *Times Literary Supplement* (and on television) Paulin articulated the case against. It centered on accusations of "race hatred": "racism, misogyny and quasi-fascist views." He suggested that the editor, Thwaite, had doctored the letters with ellipses to suppress even more "violently racist" passages than those he was prepared to include. Paulin summarized: "For the present, this selection stands as a distressing and in many ways revolting compilation which imperfectly reveals and conceals the sewer under the national monument Larkin became."

I remember thinking, when I saw the fiery Paulin's opening shot: We're not really going to do this, are we? But the new ethos was already emplaced—and, yes, we really were going to do this. On Paulin's terms, too: his language set the tone for the final assault, and mop-up, which came this spring with the publication of Andrew Motion's "Philip Larkin: A Writer's Life" (due out from Farrar, Straus next month). *Revolting, sewer:* such language is essentially unstable; it calls for a contest of the passions, and hopes that the fight will get dirty. (Blake Morrison, another poet, welcomed Paulin's intervention, with its summoning of the cloacal and the diseased, as—of all things—"salutary." Look that word up.) Thus the reception of the "Life" was marked by the quivering nostril, and by frequent recourse to the pomaded hanky, the smelling salts, and the sick bag. Writing in the London *Times*, Peter Ackroyd attributed "a rancid and insidious philistinism" to the "foul-mouthed bigot." Similarly, Bryan Appleyard saw, or nosed, "a repellent, smelly, inadequate masculinity" in "this

 They fuck you up your mum and dad
Man hands on misery to man
It deepens like a coastal shelf
Sexual intercourse began
In nineteen sixty three
Which was rather late for me
Between the end of the Chatterley ban
And the Beatles' first L.P.
Then there had only been
A sort of bargaining
A wrangle for the ring
A shame that started at sixteen
And spread to everything
Luminous watch hands
Raving winds
And I am sick for want of
Who called love
Gerald Scarfe

provincial grotesque." ("To the objective eye he seems to have been almost wholly repulsive.") A. N. Wilson, in a piece graciously entitled "Larkin: the old friend I never liked," said that "Larks" was a "really rather nasty, prematurely aged man," and "really a kind of petty-bourgeois fascist," and "really a nutcase."

We get an idea of the breadth of the debate when we see that it extended to the normally tranquil pages of the Library Association *Record*, alongside headlines like "New approach to DNH PL review" and "Funding blow to NVQ Lead Body." Here an unnamed columnist called the Commoner compared Larkin to David Irving (the historian who keeps discovering that the Holocaust never happened, and who, whether by accident or design, looks more like Hitler every year); the Commoner also said, in conclusion, that Larkin's books "should be banned." The more senior commentators in the mainstream press are, of course, not so impetuous. But offended senses rouse the will; and the will looks around for something to do about it. They can't ban—or burn—Larkin's books. What they can embark on is the more genteel process of literary disposal. A third alternative would be to group Larkin with the multitude of other major writers who harbored undemocratic (or predemocratic) opinions; but they're too stirred up for that—the offense is too rank and too immediate. So: "a sporadically excellent minor poet who has been raised to an undeserved monumentality" (Appleyard); "essentially a minor poet who, for purely local and temporary reasons, acquired a large reputation" (Ackroyd); "he seems to me more and more minor. . . . [The poems] are good—yes—but not *that* good, for Christ's sake" (Wilson).

In late April, when the smoke was clearing after the appearance of the biography, Andrew Motion reviewed the controversy in his column in the London *Observer*. Sadder and wiser—not shocked, just disappointed—Motion identified several regrettable tendencies in the anti-Larkin crusade: the lack of sociohistorical context (Larkin, "alas," was pretty typical of his time and place); the failure to distinguish private from public utterance ("We need to remind ourselves that we are dealing with Dr Larkin here, not Dr Goebbels"); "the evidence of people struggling in the straitjacket of political correctness"; and the naïve "conflation of life and art." Such a conflation, he went on:

> rest[s] on the assumption that art is merely a convulsive expression of personality. Sometimes in its purest lyric moments, it may be. More generally, it is a suppression of personality . . . an adaptation, an enlargement. It's intensely disappointing to read literary commentators who write as if they don't understand that art exists at a crucial distance from its creator.

Which sounds—and is—very sensible. But what we can also hear is the whirr of bicycle spokes: for the *Observer* piece is in fact a Tour de France of backpedalling. Unstridently, often rather hesitantly, and even sensitively, Motion's book commits all the sins that he is now wryly shaking his head over. It is not a position so much as an attitude, or just a tone. "Philip Larkin: A Writer's Life" is confidently managed, and chasteningly thorough; it is also an anthology of the contemporary tendencies toward the literal, the conformist, and the amnesiac. Future historians of taste wishing to study the Larkin fluctuation will not have to look very much further.

THE book—the life—is rich in the authentic poetry of dowdiness and deprivation, although Motion hears it faintly or not at all. Hardly anything in Larkin's letters is as thrillingly grim as the little clump of words and numerals in their top right-hand corners: Flat 13, 30 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast; 200 Hallgate, Cottingham, East Yorkshire; 192A Hallgate, Cottingham, Yorks; 172 London Road, Leicestershire ("I am established in an attic with a small window, a bed, an armchair, a basket chair, a carpet, a reading lamp THAT DOESN'T WORK, a small electric fire THAT DOESN'T WORK, and a few books"); Glentworth, King St, Wellington, Salop. Even his holiday spots sound far from festive: for example, Dixcart Hotel, Sark. No, the place-names don't help. "I envy you your visit to Sledmere," he writes to an intrepid acquaintance. When his girlfriend's mother gets her fatal heart attack, she does so "at her home in Stourport-on-Severn." Watch the sap rising as Larkin contemplates his summer break:

> My holidays loom like fearful obstacle-races: Mallaig-Weymouth with no sleeper (probably) & no reserve seats: they reserve seats, it seems, only on days when there will be enough to go around. On July 25 & Aug. 1—two busiest days in the year—*they don't.* I'M TRAVELLING ON BOTH.

One significant address was 73 Coten End, Warwick. This was the house that con-

DEER CROSSING
Modell

tained Larkin's parents, Sydney and Eva. Motion is quietly persuasive about the feel of the household, with its airlessness and constraint. Nor does he make too much of various sexy discoveries about Sydney Larkin's pro-German—even pro-Nazi—bent. It seems that Sydney attended several Nuremberg rallies in the thirties; bizarrely, he kept some sort of mechanical statue of Hitler on his mantelpiece, "which at the touch of a button leapt into a Nazi salute." Even a Nazi might have found that mannequin a little too kitsch, and insufficiently serious. Old Sydney, a city treasurer, sounds like a miserably typical eccentric of the prewar English provinces: a mood tyrant, a man who set the emotional barometer, and set it low, for everyone around him. In an unpublished autobiographical fragment cited by Motion, Larkin wrote, "When I try to tune into my childhood, the dominant emotions I pick up are, overwhelmingly, fear and boredom. . . . I never left the house without the sense of walking into a cooler, cleaner, saner and pleasanter atmosphere." Sydney died in 1948, when Larkin was in his mid-twenties; and Eva then began a widowhood that was to last almost as long as her marriage. During those twenty-nine years, Larkin wrote to her several times a week. None of these letters appears in the "Letters" (there are presumably many thousands of them), but from Motion's quotes we see that they were candid and detailed, and were not dashed off in a couple of minutes. Her letters to him are almost artistic in their flair for the trivial. Here is an especially lively extract:

> I do hope you achieved some warmth after loading all your apparel upon the bed like that. Of course you ought not to have changed those pants—remember that I thought it very unwise at the time.

Larkin's life, Motion writes in his introduction, was not "much diversified by event." This is one way of putting it. What he gives us, then, is chronic inactivity in an epic frame (five hundred and seventy pages in the British edition). This is one way of doing it. Larkin grew up, studied at Oxford, had a series of jobs as a librarian (and as nothing else), grew fat, grew frail, and died. War, travel, marriage, children: none of this ever happened to him. The poverty of event is best illustrated by the kinds of nonevent that Motion finds himself including. When Larkin attends a wedding or a musical ("he took Monica to London to see *The Boy Friend*"), when he involves himself in the expansion of the Hull University Library ("The existing plans consisted of two stages—Stage 1 and Stage 2—the first of which envisaged a central administrative three-storey block with a two-storey wing of the same height joined to it on the south side"), when in the course of his duties he is sent on a short tour of northern universities to study "issue desk layouts," we get to hear about it. No, nothing happened. Larkin worked nine to five, then wrote, then drank; he coped with his mother, he corresponded with his friends, and he had perhaps half a dozen love affairs. And that was all.

The attics-digs-lodgings period lasted from 1943, when Larkin left home, to 1955, when he arrived at Hull (where he would dourly remain). It was in 1955 that he commemorated those years in "Mr Bleaney":

"This was Mr Bleaney's room . . ."

So it happens that I lie
Where Mr Bleaney lay, and stub my fags
On the same saucer-souvenir, and try

Stuffing my ears with cotton-wool, to drown
The jabbering set he egged her on to buy.
I know his habits—what time he came down,
His preference for sauce to gravy, why

He kept on plugging at the four aways—
Likewise their yearly frame: the Frinton folk
Who put him up for summer holidays,
And Christmas at his sister's house in Stoke.

But if he stood and watched the frigid wind
Tousling the clouds, lay on the fusty bed
Telling himself that this was home, and grinned,
And shivered, without shaking off the dread

That how we live measures our own nature,
And at his age having no more to show
Than one hired box should make him pretty sure
He warranted no better, I don't know.

In such habitats, Larkin's nature was being measured. And his sexuality was fermenting, or congealing. Earlier, at Oxford, he had briefly kept a dream journal. This is Motion:

> Dreams in which he is in bed with men (friends in St John's, a "negro") outnumber dreams in which he is trying to seduce a woman, but the world in which these encounters occur is uniformly drab and disagreeable. Nazis, black dogs, excrement and underground rooms appear time and time again, and so do the figures of parents, aloof but omnipresent.

Which sure looks like a mess. He had also devoted a ridiculous amount of time and energy to the composition, under the pseudonym Brunette Coleman, of prose fictions about schoolgirls ("As Pam finally pulled Marie's tunic down over her black stockinged legs, Miss Holden, pausing only to snatch a cane from the cupboard . . ."). Along the way, he was developing a set of sexual attitudes as an obvious and understandable defense against his shyness (bad stammer), his unattractiveness ("My baldness seems to be keeping its end up well": he was twenty-six), and his fear of failure and of unrequited expense (he was always psychopathically cheap). Thus: "Women . . . repel me inconceivably. They are shits." Or "All women are stupid beings." To his old childhood friend J. B. Sutton he confessed to feelings of anxiety and cowardliness (he worried that he "had been 'doctored' in some way"), but to his own peer group he liked to sound defiant:

> Don't you think it's ABSOLUTELY SHAMEFUL that men have to pay for women without BEING ALLOWED TO SHAG the women afterwards AS A MATTER OF COURSE? I do: simply DISGUSTING. It makes me ANGRY. Everything about the ree-lay-shun-ship between men and women makes me *angry*. It's all a fucking balls up. It might have been planned by the army, or the Ministry of Food.

On another occasion, he confided, "I *don't* want to take a girl out, and spend *circa* £5 when I can toss off in five minutes, free, and have the rest of the evening to myself."

Those five minutes, it seems, would normally be spent under the auspices of pornography, or what passed for pornography at the time. Once, loitering around a sex shop in London, Larkin was approached by the owner, who quietly asked, "Was it bondage, sir?" Actually it *was* bondage: bondage, spanking, intertwined schoolgirls. He was mightily gratified when he first got his hands on a copy of a magazine called *Swish*. "Jolly good stuff, *Swish*," wrote Larkin in his thank-you letter to the friend who had sent it to him. ("Also I wanted to know if the head master stuck his cock up her bum or up her cunt but no doubt I shall go to the grave unsatisfied.") This area of fantasy is referred to in the correspondence when Larkin complains about the kind of letter he *isn't* getting. Extracts from Larkin's dream mail:

> Dear Mr Larkin, I expect you think it's jolly cheeky for a schoolgirl to—

> Dear Dr Larkin, My freind and I had an argument as to which of us has the biggest breasts and we wondered if you would act as—

> My youngest, she's fourteen and quite absurdly stuck on your poems—but then she's advanced in all ways—refuses to wear a—

Today, we all know how we feel, or how we're supposed to feel, about such "attitudes" or "mind-sets," especially when we have shorn them of individuality and self-mockery. Motion duly reaches for the nearest words: "misogyny," which at least in theory describes a real condition, and the still more problematic "sexism." He spots "a masturbatory impulse" behind several of Larkin's poems: "Wild Oats," "Sunny Prestatyn," "The Large Cool Store," and, he writes, "even 'An Arundel Tomb.' " ("Even" is certainly the mot juste.) Of "Lines on a Young Lady's Photograph Album" Motion says, "The poem connects with the other pictures Larkin liked to gaze at: the photographs in pornographic magazines. The sex life they entail—solitary, exploitative—is a crude version of the pleasure he takes in the album." "Exploitative" is the key word here. It suggests that, while you are free to be as sexually miserable as you like, the moment you exchange hard cash for a copy of *Playboy* you are in the pornography-perpetuation business and your misery becomes political. The truth is that pornography is just a sad affair all round (and its industrial dimensions are an inescapable modern theme). It is there because men—in their hundreds of millions—want it to be there. Killing pornography is like killing the messenger. The extent to which Larkin was "dependent" on it should be a measure of our pity, or even our sympathy. But Motion hears the beep of his political pager, and he stands to attention. The two poems he specifically convicts of sexism were written in 1965, at which point "sexism" had no currency and no meaning. This is a mild enough incidence, but one wonders how the literary revisionists and canon-cleansers can bear to take the money. Imagine a school of sixteenth-century art criticism that spent its time contentedly jeering at the past for not knowing about perspective.

Applied to the individual, "sexism" has always been a non-clarifier. Unlike the relationship between the races ("racism" describes a much simpler hostility), the relationship between the sexes is based on biological interdependency, which takes complex forms. Still, the biological imperative was something Larkin never felt. A virgin himself until the age of twenty-three, he was excited by virginity in women. His first love, Ruth Bowman, was not much more than a girl when he took up with her, and in appearance remained avian-childlike into middle age. (In a marvellously depressing coda to their relationship, Larkin offered Ruth "some money to help pay for a hip-replacement operation.") His other—comparatively—great romantic love, Maeve Brennan (this is not *The New Yorker's* Maeve Brennan, needless to say), was principled and religious and took many years to wear down. Larkin's thing with Maeve was accommodated within, and balanced against, a steadier relationship with his long-term companion, Monica Jones. The two women knew about each other: Larkin expended a lot of effort managing to hang on to both. Thus the reader is almost as scandalized as Andrew Motion when, after so much temporizing, after so many survived ultimatums, Larkin starts an affair (significantly, soon after Maeve's surrender) with a *third* woman: Betty Mackereth, his secretary.

Now, you might perhaps feel that having one girlfriend is happenstance, having two girlfriends is coincidence, but having three girlfriends is enemy action. After registering his astonishment at this latest turn, Motion quickly decides that "it is all of a piece with [Larkin's] previous behaviour." There is selfishness and duplicity; there is even a touch of seigneurism. One can almost hear Motion begging Larkin to seek professional help. Why can't he be more . . . sensible, caring, normal? But, of course, Larkin, at fifty-two, didn't have three women: he had

"What better way to express your feelings about that certain someone's suit than to slap him with a massive countersuit?"

"I have a strong personal commitment to dinner."

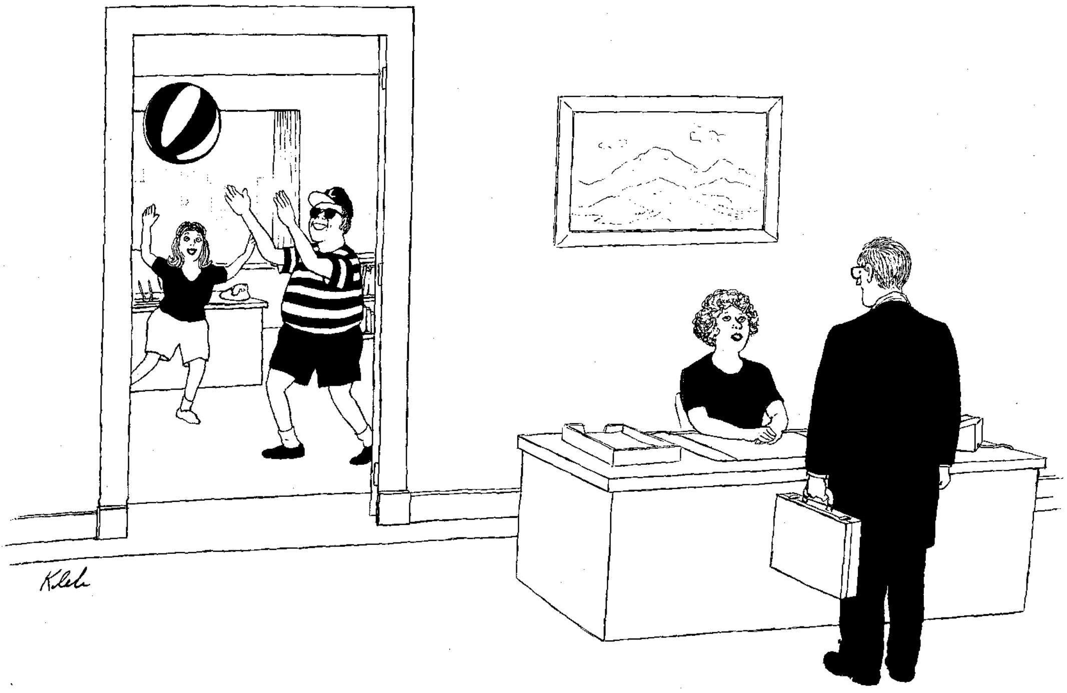
• •

four. He had Eva Larkin, who just went on and on living. "My mother," he wrote in 1977, "not content with being motionless, deaf and speechless, is now going blind. That's what you get for not dying, you see." It has been pointed out in a London paper that of the score or so major reviews of the biography none was written by a woman. (Were the literary editors feeling protective? Stand back, my dear: this won't be a pretty sight.) The job was left to the hardy menfolk, with their insecurities, their contemporary amour propre. It occurs to you that women may be less inclined to be baffled or repelled by Larkin's peculiar chaos, and less inclined to reach for the buzzwords of the hour. Just as a "philistine" does not, on the whole, devote his life to his art (however clumsily), so a "misogynist" does not devote his inner life to women (however messily). Larkin's men friends devolved into pen pals. Such intimacies as he shared he shared with women.

Before moving on to the charge of racial hatred, it will be necessary to answer to younger readers (those under about seventy) the following question: What is a correspondence? Younger readers know what a phone message is, and what a fax is. They probably know what a letter is. But they don't know what a correspondence is. Words are not deeds. In published poems (we think first of Eliot's Jew), words edge closer to deeds. In Céline's anti-Semitic textbooks, words get as close to deeds as words can get. Blood libels scrawled on front doors *are* deeds. In a correspondence, words are hardly even words. They are soundless cries and whispers; "gouts of bile," as Larkin characterized his political opinions; ways of saying "Gloomy old sod, aren't I?" or, more simply, "Grrr." Correspondences are self-dramatizations. Above all, a word in a letter is never your *last* word on any subject. Although in Larkin's writings on jazz (collected in "All What Jazz") admiration and nostalgia for black musicians are sometimes tinged with condescension, there is no public side to Larkin's prejudices, and nothing that could be construed as a racist act.

The racial hatred—and fear—in the "Selected Letters" is insistent; and very ugly it often looks to the contemporary eye. " 'Sidney Keyes is already outstanding' says Stephen Spender. . . . So is the rock of Gibraltar & a negro's cock" (Larkin at nineteen). "This Cambridge Guide looks pretty bad to me: explaining Scott's plots for niggers" (at sixty). "Too many fucking niggers about" and "I can hear fat Caribbean germs pattering after me in the Underground"—such remarks are pitched to what each correspondent is felt likely to indulge. Colin Gunner, an old school friend, brings out the worst in him: "And as for those black scum kicking up a din on the boundary—a squad of South African police would have sorted them out to my satisfaction." In this case, words are *about* deeds. (Still, there is some justice here. Gunner ended up in a house trailer: this is not much of a destiny.) For Motion, the rambling rubbish of Larkin's prejudice comes under the heading of "racism"; he even has a little subentry on it under "Larkin" in his (brilliant) index: "racism 65, 309, 400, 409-10." The word suggests a system of thought, rather than an absence of thought, which would be closer to the reality—closer to the jolts and twitches of stock response. Like mood-clichés, Larkin's racial snarls were inherited propositions, shamefully unexamined, humiliatingly average. These were his "spots of commonness," in George Eliot's sense. He failed to shed them.

"Politically correct" is a better designation than "*bien pensant*": both bespeak a strong commitment to the herd instinct, but P.C. suggests the necessary regimentation. Although it is French in its philosophical origins, P.C. begins with the very American—and attractive and honorable—idea that no one should feel ashamed of what he was born as, of what he is. Of what he does, of what he says, yes; but not ashamed of what he is. Viewed at its grandest, P.C. is an attempt to accelerate evolution. To speak truthfully, while that's still O.K., everybody is "racist," or has racial prejudices.



"I'm sorry. Mr. Lambert won't be seeing anyone this week. He's on vacation."

This is because human beings tend to like the similar, the familiar, the familial. I am a racist; I am not as racist as my parents; my children will not be as racist as I am. (Larkin was less racist than his parents; his children would have been less racist than he.) Freedom from racial prejudice is what we hope for, down the line. Impatient with this hope, this process, P.C. seeks to get the thing done right now—in a generation. To achieve this, it will need a busy executive wing, and much invigilation. What it will actually entrain is another ton of false consciousness, to add to the megatons of false consciousness already aboard, and then a backlash. Still. Here it is.

In Andrew Motion's book we have the constant sense that Larkin is somehow falling short of the cloudless emotional health enjoyed by (for instance) Andrew Motion. Also the sense, as Motion invokes his like-minded contemporaries, that Larkin is being judged by a newer, cleaner, braver, saner world. In the 1968 poem "Posterity" Larkin envisages "Jake Balokowsky, my biographer." "I'm stuck with this old fart at least a year," says Jake, not bothering "to hide / Some slight impatience with his destiny." "What's he like? / Christ, I just told you. . . . One of those old-type *natural* fouled-up guys." Jake, then, is hardly ideal for the job; but in the space of a few lines he gets further than Motion gets. He is asking himself the right questions, and neutrally: What is the difference between being like him and being like me? What is the difference between living then and living now? Motion maintains the tone of an overworked psychotherapist dealing with a hidebound depressive who, exasperatingly, keeps failing to respond to the latest modern treatments. There is nothing visceral in it. The mood of the book is one of impatience: mounting impatience.

It sometimes seems that the basis of the vexation is that Larkin was born in 1922, rather than more recently. Not only is he not well adjusted; he *doesn't want to do anything about it*. There are no serious shots at self-improvement, at personal growth. Larkin left it too late to "change his ways." Even when he spots the difficulty, he "gives little sign of wanting to make analysis part of a process of change." He doesn't show a healthy enjoyment of positive experiences like sex and travel. Of Larkin's first love: "The best he could do in the way of celebrating physical tenderness was to say 'Her hands intend no harm.' " Of a late (and rare) trip abroad: "The best he could manage was a grudging admission that he had '*survived*.' " With women generally, Larkin morbidly refuses to be caring and up-front: he is "deceitful," a "self-tormenting liar," and his affairs are characterized by "indecisions, lies and contradictions." After a while, the book starts to feel like some kind of folie à deux: Motion is extremely irritated by Larkin's extreme irritability; he is always complaining that Larkin is always complaining. One thinks of a remark in the "Letters" when Larkin is commiserating with (and complaining to) a woman friend about the inconveniences of Christmas: "Yours is the harder course, I can see. On the other hand, mine is happening to me." Motion is only writing the "Life." Larkin had to live it.

Toward the end, even Larkin's fear of death—so central, so formative, so remorseless—has come to strike Motion as just another skein of unsalubrious egotism. After seeing the *Times* obituary for Bruce Montgomery, "a really close friend," Larkin said in a letter that "it makes it all sort of realler." Motion continues: "Larkin aired the same sorrowful but self-interested feelings in a letter to Robert Conquest. 'Funeral was today,' he reported. 'All very sad, and makes the world seem very temporary.' " Since when are intimations of mortality, at a friend's graveside, "self-interested"? But perhaps all such thoughts, and perhaps mortality itself, are now suspect. Don't dwell on death. It's anti-life.

Motion is so shamanistically sensitive to self-interest that you wonder whether this is a personal quirk or whether it somehow fits in with the new-ethos picture. Sober materialism and machine careerism, in response to the incontinence of the eighties? In any event, you have to warp your mind into novel contortions as Motion monitors Larkin's "self-interest," and identifies this or that apparently straightforward remark as a "pretense" or a "tactic." The friendship with Kingsley Amis, for example, was not as warm as it seemed to "the wide world," for "both men went to some lengths to publicize it as a way of consolidating their literary reputations." My filial reluctance to make much of this (it might look like a "tactic") disappeared thirty-odd pages later, when Motion repeats his depressing strophe with regard to John Betjeman: their friendship was “affectionate but not . . . intimate”; for Larkin there was “something self-protective” in it. (“By extolling Betjeman’s virtues he helped to create the taste by which he wished his own work to be judged.”) And he played the same angle, according to Motion, when he edited the “Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse” (a seven-year job): “Larkin used the *Oxford* book to define and promote the taste by which he wished to be relished.” Even the friendship with Barbara Pym, which comes across in the “Letters” as a jewel of delicacy and disinterestedness (in fact, Larkin did more than anyone to help resuscitate Pym’s ailing career), is mysteriously found wanting: despite “a genuine warmth,” Larkin “nevertheless addressed her as if he knew an audience was listening”; he “projects,” he “parades.” Motion says, “To the extent that Larkin ever shouldered Pym’s worries, he did so knowing he would never be crushed by them.” What test is Larkin failing here? It is a pity that Pym never held out to him the promise of a free hardback or a bottle of milk, so that Motion could call the friendship “self-interested.” O brave new superego world, where you shoulder each other’s worries, where men never lie to women, where people will, of course, be marvellous when they are old and dying, where everyone is so incredibly interested in self-interest.

Biography, besides being a lowly trade, may also be attritional. Perhaps Motion (who knew Larkin, who knew Hull, and who is a poet) had his empathic powers blunted rather than sharpened by the years of (dedicated) research and (workmanlike) composition. Certainly his perspectives become fatally erratic. In his *Observer* piece, which contained more about-faces than a battalion parade ground, Motion spoke of the relationship between art and life: “All good biographers insist on separation, as well as connection.” No, what they do, or what they end up doing, is insist on connection. And Motion connects ad nauseam: “obviously the spur,” “the message for Ruth in these poems,” “put these fears into the mouth of,” “the precise source . . . is easy to trace,” “arising from the continuing wrangle,” “prompted by Maeve,” “released the rage he had been storing,” “feeding off his suppressed rage with Eva,” “the only begetters of many of his poems,” and so on. Only begetters, however, are a romantic convention: poems don’t have only begetters. At one point, Motion says that the influence of one of Larkin’s women friends “extended beyond the poems in which she appears”—appears, just as Marla Maples appears in “The Will Rogers Follies.” Biographers may claim separation, but what they helplessly insist on is connection. They have to. Or what are they about? What the hell are they doing day after day, year after year (gossiping? ringing changes on the Zeitgeist?), if the life doesn’t somehow account for the art?

“You know I was never a child,” wrote Larkin, at the age of fifty-seven. “I really feel somewhat at the last gasp. Carry me from the spot, Time, with thy all forgiving wave,” he wrote at the age of twenty-seven. Arriving in Hull, aged thirty-two, he wrote to his mother, “Oh dear, the future now seems very bleak and difficult.” It is in the word “difficult” that we hear the authentic quaver of the valetudinarian. “I’m so finished,” he wrote to a woman friend when the end really was getting closer. When it was closer still, he told Monica, with “a fascinated horror,” that he was “spiralling down towards extinction.” His last words were spoken to a woman—to the nurse who was holding his hand. Perhaps we all have the last words ready when we go into the last room. Perhaps the thing about last words is not how good they are but whether you can get them out. What Larkin said (faintly) was “I am going to the inevitable.”

Inevitable in the sense that death could never be avoided—as a fate, and as a fixation. “I don’t want to write anything at present. In fact, thinking it over, I want to die. I am very impressed by this sort of unrealised deathwish of mine,” Larkin wrote at eighteen. They probably have a name for it now, something like Early Death-Awareness Syndrome. What we get at forty or forty-five he had all along. He never did anything about it (you didn’t then); he seemed to nurture this adolescent lassitude; he made it his own patch of melancholy, and tried to write the poetry that belonged there. Humanly, it turned him into an old woman—like his mother. “I bought a pair of shoes and they don’t even *try* to keep the water out.” “I have an insensate prejudice against people who go abroad AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR, but PARTICULARLY at Easter & Christmas.” Given his opportunities for variety and expansion, he makes Mr. Woodhouse, in “Emma,” look like Evel Knievel. “This is a hell of a week. Must get a haircut. Wanted to get another dark sweater from M and S”—Marks & Spencer—“but doubt if there’ll be time or if they’ll have one.” He was so worried about his weight that he took his bathroom scales on holiday. “I’ve just returned from Hamburg,” he wrote in 1976 (it was his first trip abroad in twenty-four years). “They were all very kind, but oh the strain! The best thing was a little ‘mini-bar,’ a kind of locked drink-cupboard in my hotel room.” Colloquialisms as audacious as “news,” “deal,” “make my bed,” “deep freeze,” and “embarrassing” similarly had him reaching for his inverted commas. “How very bold of you to buy an electric typewriter,” he wrote to a friend in 1985.

What redeems and monumentalizes this slow drizzle—what makes the “Letters” a literary experience and the “Life” just one thing after another—is the comedy of candor. Here melancholy still hurts, but it embodies its own comic relief; and dignity is not needed. “The US edition of [“High Windows”] is out, with a photograph of me that cries out for the caption ‘FAITH HEALER OR HEARTLESS FRAUD?’ ” “And then my sagging face, an egg sculpted in lard, with goggles on.” “None of my clothes fit either: when I sit down my tongue comes out.” A Life is one kind of biography, and the “Letters” are another kind of Life; but the internal story, the true story, is in the “Collected Poems.” The recent attempts, by Motion and others, to pass judgment on Larkin look awfully green and pale compared with the self-examinations of the poetry. They think they judge him? No. He judges them.

His indivisibility judges their hedging and trimming. His honesty judges their watchfulness:

> If my darling were once to decide
> Not to stop at my eyes,
> But to jump, like Alice, with floating skirt into my head . . .
>
> She would find herself looped with the creep of varying light,
> Monkey-brown, fish-grey, a string of infected circles
> Loitering like bullies, about to coagulate . . .
>
> —"If, My Darling."

> For something sufficiently toad-like
> Squats in me, too;
> Its hunkers are heavy as hard luck,
> And cold as snow . . .
>
> —"Toads."

Larkin the man is separated from us, historically, by changes in the self. For his generation, you were what you were, and that was that. It made you unswervable and adamantine. My father has this quality. I don't. None of us do. There are too many forces at work on us. There are too many fronts to cover. In the age of self-improvement, the self is inexorably self-conscious. Still, a price has to be paid for not caring what others think of you, and Larkin paid it. He couldn't change the cards he was dealt ("What poor hands we hold, / When we face each other honestly!"). His poems insist on this helplessness:

> And I meet full face on dark mornings
> The bestial visor, bent in
> By the blows of what happened to happen.
>
> —"Send No Money."

> Most things are never meant.
>
> —"Going, Going."

> The unbeatable slow machine
> That brings what you'll get.
>
> —"The Life with a Hole in It."

> Life is first boredom, then fear.
> Whether or not we use it, it goes,
> And leaves what something hidden from us chose,
> And age, and then the only end of age.
>
> —"Dockery and Son."

My most enduring memory of Larkin is a composite one, formed from the many visits he paid to the series of flats and houses where I spent my first ten years, in Swansea, South Wales. My elder brother was Larkin's godson and namesake, and Larkin's visits were doubly welcome: it was the custom then for godfathers to give money to their godsons (and to their godsons' brothers); in our family we called it "tipping the boys." *My* godfather was Bruce Montgomery, who makes frequent—and decreasingly jovial—appearances in both the biography and the letters (thin talent; alcohol). When I was a child, Bruce was always jovial, and ridiculously generous. There was one occasion—it was November 5th (Bonfire Night), in perhaps 1955—when Bruce gave my brother and me the usual florin or half crown, plus a *ten-shilling note:* for fireworks. We couldn't believe it. We were like the brides' fathers in "The Whitsun Weddings," never having known "Success so huge and wholly farcical."

It was different with Larkin. We were told that Larkin "didn't really like children" ("children / With their shallow violent eyes"), and we tended to stay out of his way. When it came time for him to tip the boys, we would stand there tremulously with our palms outturned, quite flattered to think of ourselves as representatives of a menacing subgroup: children. The tip, always in the form of big, black old pennies, would be doled out in priestly silence. Threepence for Martin, fourpence for Philip (a year my senior). Later, sixpence for me, ninepence for him. The money still meant a lot to us, because we intuited what it had cost Larkin to part with it. (He was, by the way, a genuine miser. In his last weeks, he lived off "cheap red wine and Complan." He left over a quarter of a million pounds.) No, Larkin did not come out and gambol with us in the garden. (Neither, to be sure, did Bruce.) He did not tell us magical bedtime stories. But when I readdress my eager, timid, childish feelings in his presence, I find solidity as well as oddity, and tolerant humor (held in reserve, in case it was needed) as well as the given melancholy. "When will it get dark? When will it get dark?" I kept asking, that Bonfire Night. The answer in Swansea, in that vanished world, was three o'clock in the afternoon—even earlier than in Hull, where "the lights come on at four / At the end of another year." And it was always raining, whatever the season. I remember Larkin coming in from the rain, or preparing to go out in it: slightly fussy, cumbrous, long-suffering.

Rain, as an element and an ambience, provides a backdrop to the life and to this very English story. "On 13 November Larkin travelled through heavy rain to Wellington for his interview, clutching his green-bound copy of *The Public Library System of Great Britain.*" "Heavy rain," "driving rain," "torrential rain." Under the heading "Five Don'ts for Old Creatures" Larkin wrote to his mother: "4. Don't waste time worrying about *rain.* This is a wettish country. Lots of it falls. It always has done, and always will." What was Hull? Hull was as dull as rain. Rain was what Larkin felt marriages turned into; rain was what love and desire eventually became. "The Whitsun Weddings" describes a rail journey to London in which the poet witnesses the aftermaths of wedding parties as, at every stop, the train fills up with "fresh couples" about to begin their honeymoons and the rest of their lives. London approaches:

> and it was nearly done, this frail
> Travelling coincidence; and what it held
> Stood ready to be loosed with all the power
> That being changed can give. We slowed again,
> And as the tightened brakes took hold, there swelled
> A sense of falling, like an arrow-shower
> Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain.

Everybody knows "They fuck you up, your mum and dad" and the thrilled finality of that poem's closing stanza ("This Be the Verse"):

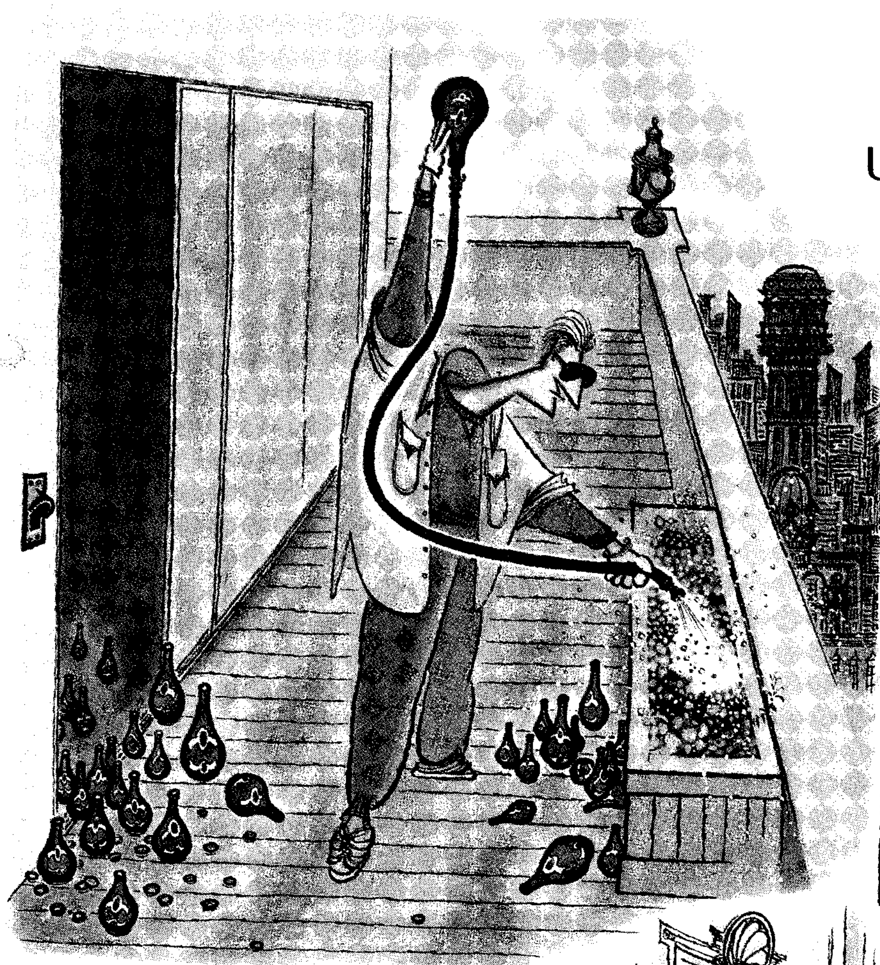
> Man hands on misery to man.
> It deepens like a coastal shelf.
> Get out as early as you can,
> And don't have any kids yourself.

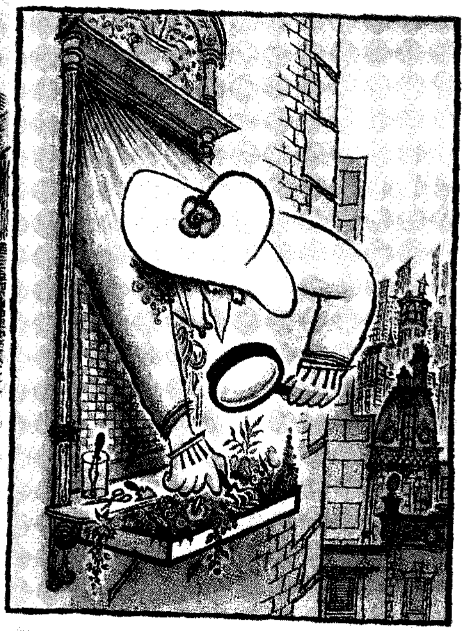
But there is always a sense of romantic balance in Larkin, however reluctant, however thwarted. "This Be the Verse" has a sister poem, called "The Trees." After finishing it, Larkin wrote "Bloody awful tripe" at the foot of the manuscript. But the last lines stand:

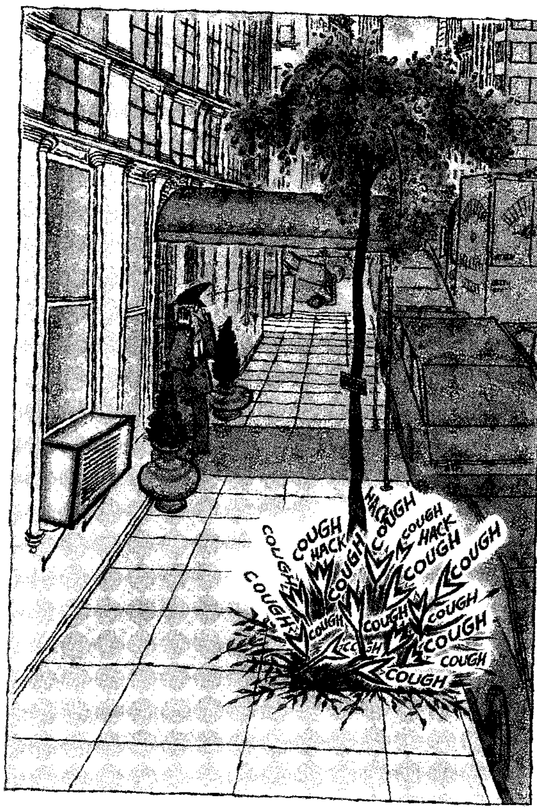
> Yet still the unresting castles thresh
> In fullgrown thickness every May.
> Last year is dead, they seem to say,
> Begin afresh, afresh, afresh. ♦

ARTIST AT LARGE
BY ARNOLD ROTH

URBAN GARDENS



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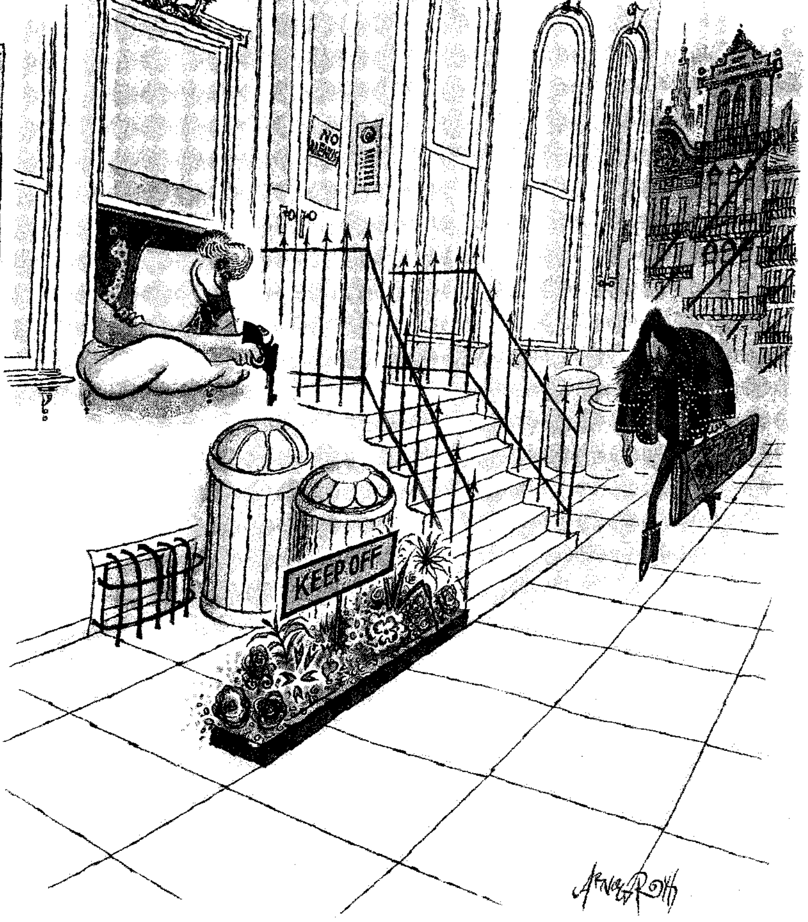

NO MENUS
KEEP OFF
Arnold Roth

THE CRITICS

DANCING

THE SPELLING OF AGON

BY ARLENE CROCE

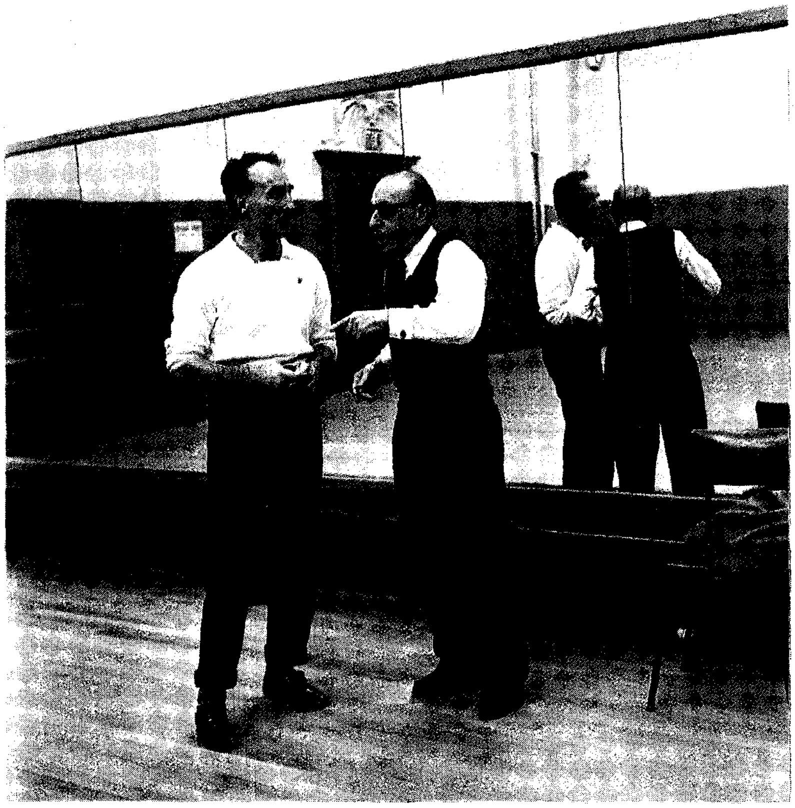
STRAVINSKY did not call his last ballet "Agon"; he called it "ΑΓΩΝ." The Greek title appears in his manuscripts and on the cover of the published orchestral score. It is only when you open the score that you read "Agon, Ballet for twelve dancers." The word "agon" in Greek is pronounced with a short a (as in Agamemnon) and a long o; the accent is on the second syllable. Balanchine always used this pronunciation. Both he and Stravinsky were communicants in the Russian Orthodox Church, with its rich mystical tradition and unbroken link to neo-Platonism. Theologically and philosophically, they were possessors of ancient wisdom; their Bible was Greek, not Latin. Culturally, they were St. Petersburgers, which is to say Western eccentrics, with a guilt-free appetite for the blessings of absolutist regimes and the undefiled fruits of European civilization, particularly of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They believed in art as the symbol of the eternal in the temporal, and that the job of the artist was to interpret the symbolic character of the material universe. They were practical, playful, and deeply superstitious. Why the Greek spelling for "Agon"? Because it contained both alpha and omega, and was thus a symbol of the ballet's function in time: to connect the beginning and the end, the first and the last. "Agon" harks back to "Apollo" (1928), the beginning of the Stravinsky-Balanchine partnership. And "Agon" was the ballet that closed one phase of Stravinskyan modernism and opened another. "Agon" begins and ends in C major; in its end is its beginning. As far as the laws of harmony are concerned, the music of "Agon" is as old as it is new.

The choreography, which also comes full circle, ending the ballet as it began, is as close in spirit to the music as choreography gets. Like all ballets, it has no past; it happens in the moment. Late Stravinsky may take a certain perspective to enjoy, but Balanchine's dances create their own perspective over and over. They teach us how to see them, how to see their newness and where it comes from. Watching the stage, you see deeply and clearly, you notice this feature and that. As each climax appears and gives way to the next, you begin to see semblances; you feel things adding up, gravitating toward a central image. The more sharply the dancers differentiate one shape or accent from another, the more clearly you understand the integrity of the image—the thing that makes this ballet "Agon," and not "Stravinsky Violin Concerto" or "Symphony in Three Movements." Accurate performances, such as the ones given this past spring by Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle, have the kind of life that this ballet, and no other ballet, was born with.

You cannot name the image, but you can feel its strength as a metaphor. I have always thought that "Agon" drew its personality from the city it was made in, New York, and its sensibility from the men who made it. The blare and heat in the music, the crazy timing, the disconcerting eruptions in the choreography (each dance has a different ending) match the hectic behavior of city streets. The ballet's interior life, though, is quiet and purposeful. The strangely elegant, cricketlike solo that comes in the exact middle of the piece, the long, secluded, nervously steady pas de deux that traverses the days and weeks of one relationship—these are a reflection of a spiritual disposition at once tender and ironic. The inner calm of the ballet is under threat, yet it gains something from the fact: tension, grandeur. This is the public and private life of the city as seen, as lived, by foreigners. But we are all foreigners in New York.

How "Agon" looks to audiences in Seattle I cannot say. I saw it in a theatre much too big for it, the Opera House. Outside lay the bay on one side, the hills on the other, much too beautiful. Onstage, everything was pristine: the high white light, the skimpy black leotards, the sense of dislocation, the sense of *sense.* I was seeing "Agon," but what was the audience seeing? A ballet of the fifties? A masterpiece? New York? Why couldn't I believe that we shared one experience, the audience and I—that possibly there were other people there who remembered the last time "Agon" was great in New York and could name the man who was mayor. (It was before Koch.) Balanchine's "Chaconne" was also on the program. Again, the performance was excellent. To me, "Chaconne" looked just right in Seattle—prosperous, airy, homogeneously classical. But "Agon" was something else.

SINCE Stravinsky's death, in 1971, Stravinskyana has become a major industry. Robert Craft, the composer's friend and amanuensis, has brought out reams of memorabilia, including three volumes of correspondence published in the eighties. Every year brings its crop of dissertations by American academics, keeping pace with the brainstorms of Dutch musicologists. While new recordings fill the bins at Tower, the entire œuvre is re-recorded on twenty-two CDs and issued as a boxed set. You can currently hear "Agon" conducted by Stravinsky, by Craft, by the former New York City Ballet music director Robert Irving, or by Eugene Mravinsky, Balanchine's classmate at the Petrograd Conservatory of Music, or played on two pianos by Dutch twin pianists. The musicologists are right who say that the music cannot really be understood apart from Balanchine's staging. "Agon" is not "abstract" music, nor is it a cerebral experience, no matter how fascinating its durational proportions and pitch-class sets. It is dance music that has been permeated by the presence and the authority of Balanchine.


Balanchine and Stravinsky in 1957, rehearsing for the première of "Agon."

MARTHA SWOPE

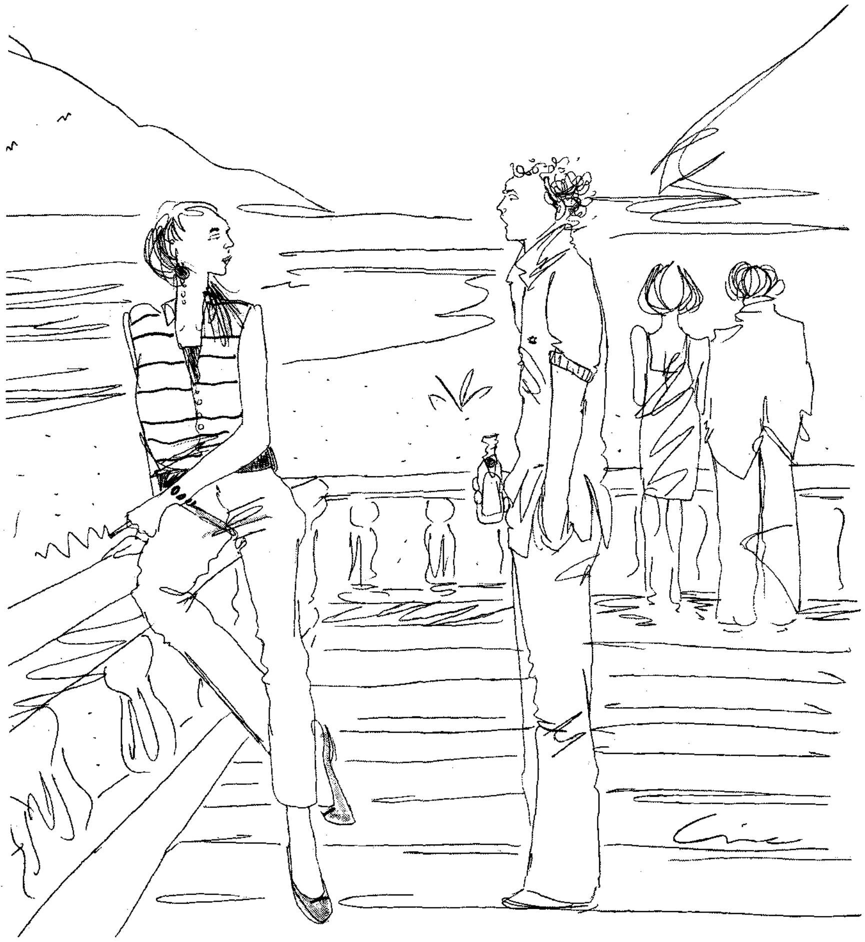
The idea for the ballet, if not the title, had been his, relayed by Lincoln Kirstein in a 1953 letter to Stravinsky: "He suggested a competition before the gods . . . the gods are tired and old; the dancers reanimate them by a series of historic dances . . . called courante, bransle, passepied, rigaudon, menuet, etc. etc. It is as if time called the tune, and the dances which began quite simply in the sixteenth century took fire in the twentieth and exploded." Kirstein's letter is uncannily prescient. Whether his words or Balanchine's, "took fire in the twentieth century and exploded" is an exact description of "Agon" before the fact. The choreographer, obviously inspired by the idea of bringing ancient dances alive, is already envisioning the effect he wants to create. Normally, Balanchine's ideas were generated by music. For him to know exactly what he would do in an as yet uncomposed ballet, he had to have known what the composer would do. And he may have known it before Stravinsky knew it himself.

By the time Balanchine came up with this idea, "Agon" had been under discussion for five years, and it would be another four years before the ballet's première, making it close to a decade since the appearance of the previous Stravinsky-Balanchine ballet, "Orpheus," and close to three decades since the first one, "Apollo." The actual composition of the music of "Agon" did not take long—all told, probably less than a year. But Stravinsky was constantly having to shelve "Agon" in order to accept other commissions and go on concert tours. It is a shock to realize that the world's greatest composer entered his seventies still having to make a living by conducting. And only half of what he conducted was his own music. The stark facts were disclosed by Robert Craft after Stravinsky died: "In the early 1950s his music was comparatively rarely performed and only sparsely represented on records, while his new pieces of whatever kind met with open hostility. If the popular audience was aware of him at all, it was as the composer—probably dead—of 'Firebird.' " The ballet audience, a small but burgeoning minority, knew Stravinsky very well, mostly because Balanchine and Kirstein kept as many of his works as they could in the repertory of New York City Ballet. But not even this audience knew the Stravinsky of the early fifties. He was composing a great deal of vocal music, both sacred and secular. He was also preparing another of his phoenix-like recoveries from exhausted compositional modes. Between the world première of "The Rake's Progress," in 1951, and its New York première, in 1953, which Balanchine directed, Stravinsky began his long approach to serialism.

A United States citizen since 1945, Stravinsky lived with his second wife, Vera, in a one-bedroom cottage in Los Angeles. During the summer of 1954, Balanchine came to visit, and the two men settled the formal structure of the new ballet. On August 12th, Stravinsky chose his Greek title. He was thinking in Greek because the ballet had been intended from the outset to form a trilogy with "Apollo" and "Orpheus." Several ideas for a libretto had been entertained: Terpsichore (this from Balanchine), Nausicaä, Bacchus, Apollo Architectons. Auden had been consulted; so had T. S. Eliot, whose impression of "Orpheus"—"He said it was the most wonderful stage experience he has had since he could not remember when"—was reported by Kirstein to Stravinsky when New York City Ballet performed in London in 1950. Eliot was unable to give Kirstein an idea for a sequel to "Apollo"/"Orpheus," but he did say that he would be delighted to work with Stravinsky on a ballet of "Sweeney Agonistes." Though nothing ever came of this, Craft thinks it was "Sweeney Agonistes" that put the title "Agon" into Stravinsky's head.

Agon means contest. In proposing "a competition before the gods," Balanchine was surely thinking of "Apollo," in which three Muses compete for the god's favor. The venerable court dances also called up the French Renaissance atmosphere of "Apollo." But "Agon," as Balanchine choreographed it, had an atomic-age urgency; it had thrills, danger, apocalyptic energy. And it was wall-to-wall dancing, without even the shadowy pretext of a competition before the gods. Kirstein's own preference had been for a story ballet on a mythological subject. The author of many a distinguished ballet libretto ("Transcendence," "Filling Station," "Billy the Kid"), Kirstein recognized Balanchine's scheme. He called it a "ballet-ivanich," meaning that it was a logical descendant of former Stravinsky-Balanchine ballets that were themselves descendants of the classical dance suite. Balanchine's tendency in "Jeu de Cartes" and "Balustrade" (the forerunner of "Stravinsky Violin Concerto") and "Danses Concertantes" had been to keep reducing plot elements while boosting dance. In "Orpheus" he had reversed himself for the sake of a great story. Kirstein loved "Orpheus." But neither he nor anyone else had been able to work up much enthusiasm for "Nausicaä" (the title alone was off-putting), whereas Balanchine was very high on this new old-model ballet, son of "Jeu de Cartes," grandson of "Apollo," that he wanted to make. In spite of himself, Kirstein felt Balanchine's excitement, and he conveyed it to Stravinsky. In return, Kirstein got his wish: "Agon" had a classical "Greek" subject, but it was wrapped up in a surprise package.

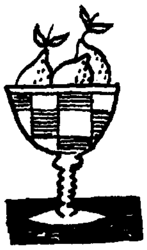
To Balanchine, the idea of a "contest" was plainly Olympian—a game involving the heroic endurance and risk-taking of Olympic athletes. In 1927, he had choreographed Olympic games in "La Chatte," the ballet that directly preceded and gave rise to "Apollo." Summing up the ballet's impact, the British critic C. W. Beaumont remarked on its "power to convey much more forcefully than ballets directly inspired by classical mythology something of that ideal of physical beauty which was the dominant motive in the dance festivals of the ancient Greeks." This same point could have been made thirty years later about "Agon." "La Chatte" has not survived in Balanchine's repertory, so we cannot know its actual relationship to "Agon" (or to "Apollo," for that matter), but in its vision of superbly skilled bodies striking metaphors like torches struck in the dark it was a landmark ballet.



"Have I told you lately to go jump in the lake?"

In "Apollo," physical elegance and extreme physical testing go hand in hand with intellectual and moral beauty, an idea that went down well in the twenties but flew in the face of the fifties, when, as Balanchine suggested, the gods were old and tired. Balanchine meant the Old World gods of art and music who had passed with him into the New World and were by then conspicuously few. Ballet had taken root in America, but America had not produced a ballet composer on whom Balanchine could rely. Did he harbor a fear that Stravinsky had grown too tired or too discouraged ever to come across with the long-promised new ballet? Was he worried about losing Stravinsky the dance composer to Stravinsky the serialist? Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern were hardly known to the world for their ballets. Daringly and a little recklessly, Balanchine proposed that Stravinsky consider writing what Kirstein described, in that same 1953 letter, as "a ballet which would seem to be the enormous finale of a ballet to end all the ballets the world has ever seen, mad dancing, variations, pas d'action, pas de deux, etc., with a final terrific and devastating curtain when everyone would be exhausted." This really sounds like Balanchine speaking, improvising in his excitable, boyish way a Big Bang theory of ballet. Just as Stravinsky had ushered in modernism with the titanic "Sacre du Printemps," now he would take it out with another ballet, as yet unnamed, which would be the ultimate version of the dance that ended "Le Sacre"—the Sacrificial Dance of the Chosen Virgin—and would either kill ballet or cure it. Stravinsky got the point. It is doubtful whether he sensed a personal challenge in Balanchine's image of tired gods who have to be revived. By the end of the year, he had written the new ballet's opening fanfare, a blast on the trumpets that could have brought down Jericho.

INSTEAD of a story, "Agon" presents a drama, and Stravinsky himself is the hero—the prot*agon*ist. Since the war, his career as the leader of Western tonal music had been in crisis—a crisis that he was resolving in his own way, gradually closing the door on tonalism and opening the one on serialism. In 1952-53, he had composed a twelve-minute work, "Septet," in which elements of serial technique appeared within a framework of tonal harmony. As if in anticipation of Kirstein's letter proposing a suite of court dances, "Septet" also contained a passacaglia and a gigue. As always with Stravinsky, a move forward was initiated with a move back to the past. The concurrent emphasis on vocal music seemed to indicate a desire to revisit his earliest sources of inspiration. (His father had been a prominent basso in the Maryinsky opera.) And in the midst of the songs, the Mass, and the cantata there appeared this striking little piece for chamber ensemble. Craft has called the gigue in "Septet" the most drastic step taken by Stravinsky in thirty years. Balanchine, who was alert to every move Stravinsky made, must have seized on it as the clue to the direction the Master would be taking in the new ballet. It was not that Stravinsky did not know where he was going; he did know. But he needed to be told that somewhere in the maze of serial method he would come upon the means to create a ballet. As if to reassure him further, Balanchine launched his own investigation of twelve-tone theory, with Schoenberg's "Music for a Film Scene," Op. 34. (The ballet, called "Opus 34," opened at the City Center on January 19, 1954, two weeks before the première of "The Nutcracker.")

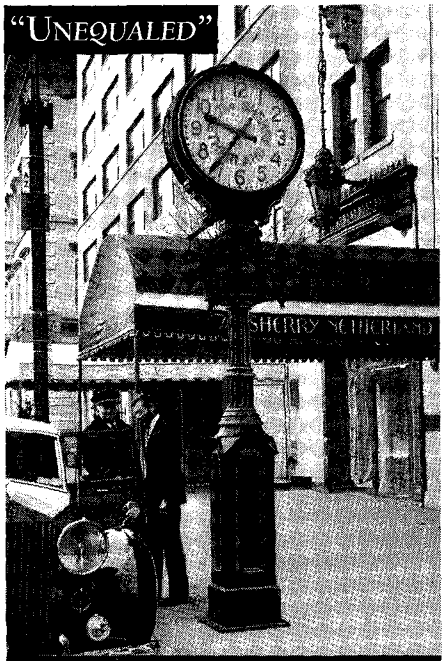


In "Septet" and more dramatically in "Agon," early tonal harmony—harmony of the late Baroque—is yoked to twentieth-century atonalism. Stravinsky was reverting not only to his own roots but to the roots of tonality in Western music. (Once, to someone who was acclaiming Stravinsky's contribution as the turning point in music, the composer rejoined, "No, it is the turning-around point.") His reply to Kirstein is illuminating: "I will compose a 'Concerto for the dance' for which George will create a matching choreographic construction."

"Concerto for the dance" is a phrase that recalls "Danses Concertantes." Stravinsky says somewhere that the antiphonal character of the concertante form reminded him of a contest, so it would not be surprising if he had chosen this form for "Agon." (One of the subsections of "Septet" is labelled "concertante.") But it is not the interaction of full orchestra and subgroups that interests him in "Agon"; it is the interaction of the orchestra and the dancers. Different and unpredictable combinations of instruments accompany each dance, except on the first and last pages of the score (the alpha and omega), which are the same. The full orchestra is never heard. Some of the instrumentation is so sparse and the combinations so far-flung that in Seattle mikes were set up in the pit to enable the players to hear each other. Still, the natural locus for Stravinsky to start his researches for "Agon" was the concerto grosso as developed by Corelli in the first flush of tonal harmony, especially inasmuch as the dance suite as developed by Lully had been his starting point for "Apollo." Lully and Corelli: What lover of French Baroque music does not associate them via François Couperin's twin monuments "Les Apothéoses"? What lover of ballet associates Couperin with "Apollo"? In that score, by invoking what seems to be every French dance composer from Lully to Delibes and throwing in Tchaikovsky for good measure, Stravinsky conceals the special use he makes of Couperin. In "L'Apothéose de Lully" Couperin pictures Lully and Corelli on Parnassus, where they are peacefully engaged in a *contest* between French and Italian styles. Neither wins; rather, the two styles are blended, so as to create "musical perfection." In "Apollo," Terpsichore wins the contest for Apollo's affections, but Calliope and Polyhymnia are not banished. They take their places in the blend of the arts—music, dance, mime, poetry—which produces ballet. *Les goûts réunis*—the French and Italian styles reunited to the satisfaction of Apollo—was Couperin's triumph of assimilation. In "Apollo," with Stravinsky weaving a contrapuntal web, Balanchine had had a similar triumph, showing the Diaghilev ideal of the *Gesamtkunstwerk.* Perhaps, too, it had pleased Stravinsky, a Russian, to absorb the French style as well as Couperin had absorbed the Italian style. Did he dream that thirty years later he would discover an even more fundamental reason to return to "Les Apothéoses"?

Stravinsky and Schoenberg had come to represent the polarity of musical ideology in the second half of the twentieth century; they were the Lully and Corelli

"UNEQUALED"



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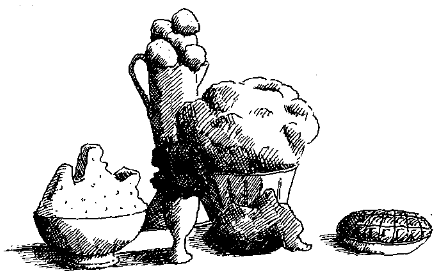
of their era. Who first proposed that Stravinsky become his own Couperin and attempt a similar union with the Viennese school? Robert Craft, who guided both Stravinsky and Balanchine in their initial investigations of serial and twelve-tone form, nowhere names Couperin as a role model or "Les Apothéoses" as a factor in Stravinsky's preparations for "Agon." Nor does the matter come up in any of the published correspondence. It's impossible that so conscious and wise an artist as Stravinsky would have been oblivious of the parallel, yet it would have been immodest of him as well as imprudent, at this sensitive juncture in his career, to tell people what he was up to. Besides, it's not the sort of thing anyone would need to mention, particularly an artist like Stravinsky, who aligned himself with the classical tradition of appropriating old ideas and procedures, and was collaborating with someone as much a part of that tradition as he. As artists, Stravinsky and Balanchine were on the same plane, and they were intimates. Stravinsky, twenty-two years older, had always been the "leader," but now their relationship was changing. Mentally, they had become almost one person. When it came to ballet, Balanchine could probably do some of Stravinsky's thinking for him, and perhaps in this instance he did more than propose a "scenario."

As he and Stravinsky conceived the ballet that became "Agon," it broke down into three sections danced by twelve dancers, eight women and four men. Only the middle section includes the modern versions of the court dances that Balanchine originally spoke of doing. These take the form of two pas de trois, one for a man with two women and one for a woman with two men. A pas de deux rounds out the suite. The two outer sections of the ballet were intended to reflect each other, with the same groupings, and the ballet was to end as it began, with the four men standing upstage, their backs to the audience. The original plotting of the dances seems overly preoccupied with symmetry. The opening quartet of men is succeeded by a double quartet of women, then all three quartets combine. In Part III, the two sets of four become four sets of two, and the three sets of four become four sets of three. As in the two trios of Part II, the number of dancers is the same, but the roles have switched gender. The court dances follow the traditional (by the nineteenth century) format of the pas de trois: a solo for the principal dancer, a duet (here a double solo) for the partners, a coda for all three. Even the pas de deux has variations and a coda.

In the ballet as choreographed, remarkably little has changed, but the entire structure is dynamic. The role-and-gender-reversal idea is set in motion in the triple quartet of Part I, when men and women start changing places as they dance. Instead of tapering back to the beginning, the last dance suddenly shrinks back, leaving the four men to complete the ballet. The beauty of symmetry is deliberately buffeted by countless small irregularities, discontinuities, and misalignments. All along the way, the choreographer and the composer have put in every surprise that they can think of. The pas de deux, unorthodox in everything but format, really does seem to be the most astounding the world has ever seen, the pas de deux to end them all, etc. The most sheerly novel aspect of "Agon" is the quality of its suspense. You simply cannot guess what is coming next.

How much of it was worked out in advance we'll never know. The only document that survives from the conferences in the summer of 1954 is a chart that Stravinsky made afterward, listing the order of dances, their timings, and the number of dancers, with stick figures for males and females. Vera Stravinsky's diary has entries for different days: "Balanchine arrives." "Balanchine for dinner." "I make a cheesecake for Balanchine." And that is all. The two men worked each day in Stravinsky's studio, with the door closed. In later years, Mrs. Stravinsky remembered hearing talking and singing. After a few hours, the two would emerge looking satisfied, and Stravinsky would say, "Good, we did a lot today." Balanchine's recollections of the substance of those sessions give no hint that more than structural decisions were made. Stravinsky had been studying a seventeenth-century dance manual sent him by Kirstein, but the actual style or content of the dances cannot be traced to anything that passed between him and Balanchine in 1954—unless, of course, we assume that Balanchine's statement "We constructed every possibility of dividing twelve" means *every* division and every application of that division.



But why twelve? In casting "Agon" with twelve dancers, Stravinsky possibly had in mind the title of William Bolitho's once popular book about historical figures, "Twelve Against the Gods." Isadora Duncan, who by negative example had inspired Terpsichore in "Apollo," is one of Bolitho's twelve. Or twelve could have signified the Twelve Apostles. Alexander Blok, the greatest Russian poet of Stravinsky's generation, had made the Apostles revolutionaries. The ballet would make them *athleti dei*, athletes of God. It is also possible—in fact, likely—that the twelve dancers signified the twelve tones of the dodecaphonic scale, just as the seven dancers in the cast of "Apollo" (Apollo, three muses, Leto, two handmaidens) had signified the seven tones of the diatonic scale discovered by the early Greeks. Some musicologists have resisted the idea that the twelve dancers stand for the twelve tones, on the basis that Stravinsky hadn't in 1954 made a commitment to twelve-tone music. It is true that until he took the plunge Stravinsky sought to disguise the progress he was making in his study of the new music, even denying that he was interested. "Serialism? Personally, I find quite enough to do with the seven tones of the scale," he told an interviewer. "Nevertheless, the serial composers are the only ones with a discipline that I respect. Whatever else serial music may be, it is certainly pure music. Only, the serialists are prisoners of the figure twelve, while I feel greater freedom with the figure seven."

When did Stravinsky know that "Agon" would be to serialism what "Apollo" was to modalism? Did he deliberately compose "Septet" (note title) to be twelve minutes long? Probably not, but he would have thought it a sign. I find it easier to believe that Stravinsky and Balanchine knew that part of "Agon" would be dodecaphonic than to believe they knew that the ballet would not be finished until 1957. To them, as to Dante, Goethe, Schiller, Bach, and Mozart, numbers were charismatic. In 1957, Stravinsky turned seventy-five; each number adds up to twelve. But in 1954 Stravinsky thought he would finish the ballet by 1956. For an answer to why twelve is the operative number in "Agon," one need go no further than Arcangelo Corelli. Corelli's obsession with twelve—his entire output consisted of five books of twelve sonatas each plus one book of twelve concerti grossi—could easily have provided a reason to settle on twelve without waking the dragon of dodecaphonism. And Balanchine kept Corelli in mind for the ballet "Square Dance," which he introduced in the same season as "Agon."

"Your car is being hot-wired."

• •

In the pas de deux of "Agon," Stravinsky makes an unconditional foray into twelve-tone territory. But the Viennese composer he pays homage to is Webern, not Schoenberg. And in his stylistic imitations of Italian Baroque music, heard most clearly in the second half of the prelude that introduces each of the three sections of the central part of the ballet, the sound is more Monteverdian than it is Corellian. Corelli's city was Rome; Monteverdi's was Venice. It was in Venice, his favorite city, that Stravinsky met Balanchine in September, 1956, and played for him as much of the score of "Agon" as he had composed, which was up to the end of the second pas de trois. Stravinsky was in Venice for the première of "Canticum Sacrum." Balanchine was on tour with New York City Ballet. It's likely that they set the time of the pas de deux during this meeting. It would be of record length: six minutes out of a twenty-three-minute score. They probably also discussed choreography. Like Lully, Stravinsky interested himself in every aspect of his ballets, down to the last detail. In his sketches of the Bransle Gay, the solo in the second pas de trois, he indicates the castanet rhythm and the places where the soloist should turn her head, first to one of the male dancers and then to the other. But in the finished ballet the turns of the head come in an earlier dance. After the two men have presented the woman in an elaborate unsupported balance, she acknowledges their assistance and then leaves the stage in a surprise exit. It's one of Balanchine's wittiest moments, which he must have acted out for Stravinsky and which he may even have envisioned from the very beginning, to judge from the position of the Bransle Gay in the pas-de-trois sequence. Instead of coming before the duet, as in the first pas de trois, the solo comes after, indicating that the ballerina has to exit only seconds after her entrance and return later. Either Stravinsky misplaced her parting gesture or the events of the second pas de trois were less firmly established in Balanchine's mind than the sequence would suggest. But from the Venice meeting he undoubtedly gained a comprehensive view of the new ballet as he would actually stage it, and Stravinsky had his work cut out for him.

They then parted to resume their respective itineraries. On October 2, 1956, Stravinsky had a major stroke while conducting in Berlin. New York City Ballet had just completed its season there the night before. Balanchine took the news hard. Betty Cage, N.Y.C.B.'s general manager, recalls hearing muffled sobs outside the hotel room where she had set up her office in Berlin. Opening the door, she found Balanchine, too overcome to tell her what had happened. Robert Craft reports that when Stravinsky left the hospital, five weeks later, the doctor was saying that he had not more than six months left to live. Meanwhile, Tanaquil Le Clercq, Balanchine's wife and one of his principal ballerinas, lay ill, unable to dance. She had been stricken on October 31st in Copenhagen, the next-to-last stop on the European tour. The doctors diagnosed polio. Balanchine was in a state of collapse.

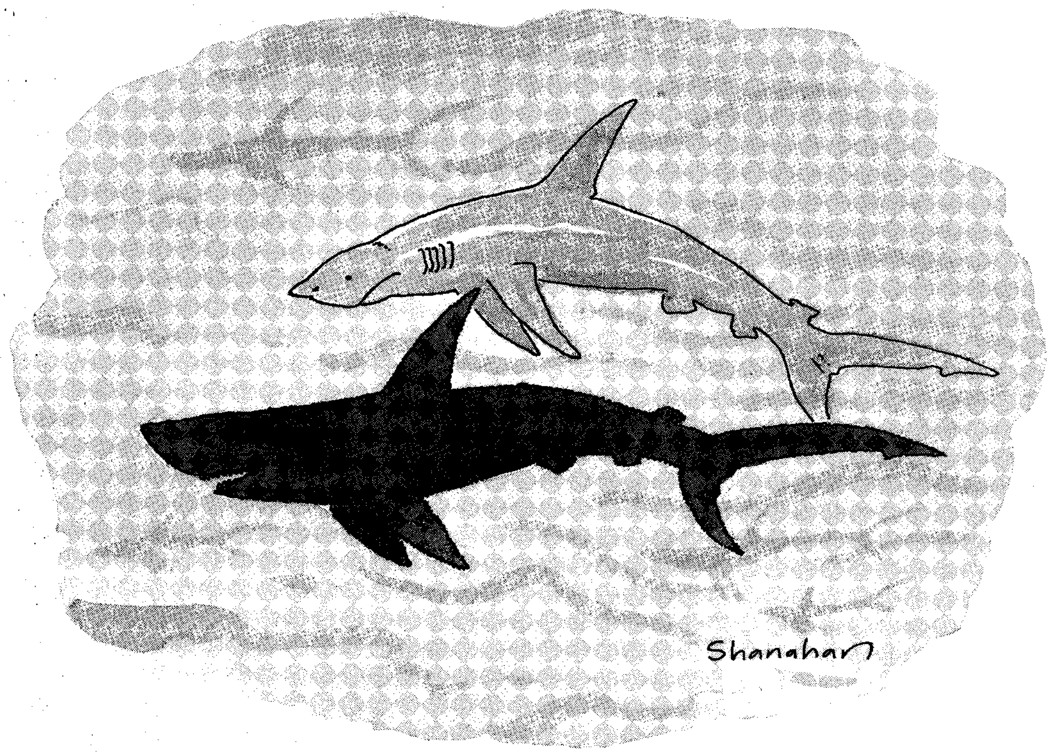
STRAVINSKY recovered and went back to composing "Agon." In New York, the New York City Ballet opened its winter season at the City Center. No one knew when Balanchine, who remained with his wife in Copenhagen, would return to New York or if, when he did return, he would ever choreograph again. But a year later, on December 1, 1957, Balanchine gave the world première of "Agon" to a sold-out house. Diana Adams and Arthur Mitchell danced the revolutionary pas de deux, which was the first part of "Agon" that Balanchine choreographed, to the first music that Stravinsky had composed after his stroke. The male role in the first pas de trois was danced by Todd Bolender, and Melissa Hayden had a triumph as the woman in the second pas de trois, a role that almost certainly would have gone to Le Clercq.

Balanchine and Stravinsky, or Balanchinsky, as they had now become, had been changed by the terrible events of 1956, but "Agon" was constructed to be, in the choreographer's words, "a machine that smiles." The cool wit of "Agon," conveyed by the original cast, has disappeared over the years into sober efficiency. Balanchine kept wanting to lighten things up. When he rehearsed Bart Cook in the Saraband, he told the dancer, "You're a jester, you have on cap and bells." The mood of the pas de deux was, as they used to say in the fifties, *real* cool. Part of its revolutionary impact came from the fact that Adams was white and Mitchell black. As Mitchell likes to point out, Balanchine enjoyed and exploited the contrast in skin color. Back in the forties, he had said to Ruthanna Boris, "I wish I had a company half white and half black. Then I could play checkers." I think "Agon," with its gender reversals, dancers displacing dancers, and sudden strategic coups, gives us a good idea of the kind of game Balanchine was longing to play. The series of displacements in Part I recalls a famous card trick that was described in this magazine in Mark Singer's Profile of the magician Ricky Jay, which appeared, oddly enough, while I was in Seattle watching rehearsals. The trick is called "The Four Queens." Each of the four queens is placed with three numbered cards. "Somehow," Singer wrote, "the queens must 'find each other's company'—that is, transport themselves so that what remained would be three groups of four numbered cards and a quartet of queens." This is a maneuver that Balanchine may actually have used in "Jeu de Cartes." In "Agon," the four men are segregated to begin with from the two quartets of women. They infiltrate the female ranks, displacing women so as to create three integrated quartets, and end by resegregating themselves as a group. The whole sequence is so swiftly and fluidly executed while so much else is going on, both in the dancing and in the music, that you may not even notice what has happened to the male quartet until it suddenly reappears.

"Agon" was an immediate sensation, the main draw of a season in which, besides "Square Dance," Balanchine presented "Gounod Symphony," "Stars and Stripes," and a revival of "Apollo." Kirstein had originally planned "Agon" to be a celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of "Apollo," which would have meant a première in 1953. Instead, it was a double celebration, Stravinsky's seventy-fifth birthday and "Apollo" 's thirtieth. Balanchine reflected the fact in the two double solos—female twins in the Gaillarde and male twins in the Bransle Simple. (Stravinsky and "Apollo" were both Gemini; the ballet was produced by Diaghilev on June 12, 1928.) Stravinsky's extreme consciousness of numbers made him careful not to complete the score until April 27th, twenty years to the day after the American première of "Apollo" with Balanchine's choreography and twenty-nine years to the day after the world première, also in America, with Adolph Bolm's choreography.

But it is the Diaghilev première on the twelfth day of the sixth month that seems to have been uppermost in Stravinsky's mind when he came to compose the Bransle Gay. The click of castanets is heard throughout the dance in six-beat phrases, which lie under the music except for the first measure, the sixth, the eleventh, and the last, during all of which the music stops. Between the first and the sixth measures, we get counts of 7, 5, 5, 7; between the sixth and the eleventh, we get 5, 7, 7, 5. Then, as the music switches to the alternate melody, we get eleven measures of five counts each. This changes in the *twelfth* measure in time to end the dance with 7, 5, 5, 6. The time signature of the solo is alternately 3/8 (which can be transposed to 6/16), 5/16, and 7/16. The sixes, sevens, and fives are dodec*agon*al rhythms, but the long string of fives recalls to us the variation of Terpsichore. The goddess danced twos and threes in counter-rhythm; her descendant in "Agon" dances sevens and fives against a steady stream of sixes. And Terpsichore's famous four pauses or poses, the music stopping as the sense of flow continues, are commemorated in the Bransle's four measures of silence, during which the castanets keep time.

In a dance bursting with revelations, Stravinsky has room for one more. If you lay out the counts of the Bransle Gay and disregard their numerical value, you get an outline of the central



"I thought I'd wear the mohair for a change."

section of the ballet. The first set of 7's and 5's is the man's pas de trois. The second set of 5's and 7's is the woman's (reverse gender) pas de trois. The third set—the eleven measures of five counts—is the pas de deux, trailing off into variation, variation, coda. The castanets' sixes mark the beginning and end of each set.

The relation of all this number symbolism and cryptography to musical values is something I am not qualified to discuss. I suspect that the number system was useful to Stravinsky mainly because it supplied him with the strict measurements that he always needed in order to compose. The fact that they were "magical" measurements that seemed to spell out the destiny of the piece under construction gives us an insight into the psychic makeup of this supposedly coldly methodical composer. Stravinsky created music according to his religious beliefs. To him, order is not something the believer imposes on the cosmos; it is something he discovers. In all humility, Stravinsky celebrated his own existence in "Agon." He had been given life against the medical prognostications, while others had been struck down: Le Clercq, who never danced again, was not the only casualty of the tragic year of 1956-57. The director of the Wadsworth Atheneum, A. Everett Austin, Jr., who had been instrumental in bringing Balanchine to America, and the painter and scenic designer Pavel Tchelitchev, who was to have mounted the Stravinsky evening for New York City Ballet, both died in their fifties.

Balanchine always said, "God creates, I assemble." Numbers worked for him much the way they worked for Stravinsky, except that for the choreographer they took on human form, or human guise. The skeleton of the Bransle Gay is a kind of key to the structure of Part II. To Balanchine, the dancer of the Bransle Gay really is Terpsichore; she controls the direction of the ballet. In the coda of her pas de trois, she dances Terpsichore's actual steps from "Apollo." It would not have been unlike Balanchine, ever Terpsichore's servant, to use the rhythm of her castanets as a guide in casting the women in "Agon": short short long long. The two women in the first pas de trois, Barbara Milberg and Barbara Walczak, were short short; Tanaquil Le Clercq and Diana Adams were long long. Of the four women who made up the rest of the female cast, Francia Russell and Dido Sayers were on the tall side, and Roberta Lubell and Ruth Sobotka were of medium height. Balanchine didn't keep to these proportions after it turned out that Le Clercq wouldn't be there to match Adams' height and length. To cling to even so small a detail would have been to impose an order that had been annulled by fate.

AFTER "Agon" had been in the repertory for a couple of seasons, Balanchine decided to revise the Gaillarde and called Francia Russell to rehearsal. He set the whole of what became the standard version on her, and she danced it in the first pas de trois opposite Jillana. Francia Russell is now co-director, with her husband, Kent Stowell, of Pacific Northwest Ballet. She is one of the great Balanchine répétiteurs, and she is also a teacher, a ballet mistress, and an administrator. Seattle's "Agon" is the result, first, of her observation of Balanchine's process. She was there, watching him work. More important, it is the result of her scrupulousness in repeating this process, and her understanding of the purpose behind it. P.N.B. dancers are trained up to the highest current standards; they are not kept in a glass case labelled "The Golden Age," and nostalgia is no part of the Russell-Stowell operation. Inevitably, though, we talked a lot about Balanchine and his dancers at the City Center.

Le Clercq we knew less well than Adams. In the years after Le Clercq's tragedy, Adams was Balanchine's principal ballerina. Besides "Agon," she originated roles in "Episodes," "Monumentum pro Gesualdo," and "Liebeslieder Waltzes," and was initially cast for Titania in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and for "Movements for Piano and Orchestra." She was Francia Russell's model, as she was Suzanne Farrell's. Diana Adams and Francia Russell became friends, brought up their children together, shared beach houses. As the children grew up, they saw less of each other. When Adams moved to California a few years ago, for some unexplained reason she cut herself off from her friends on both coasts. She seemed to want to put the ballet world behind her once and for all. She declined Russell's invitation to come help with "Agon" and other ballets that the company would

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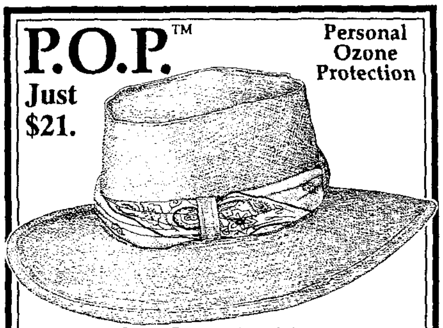

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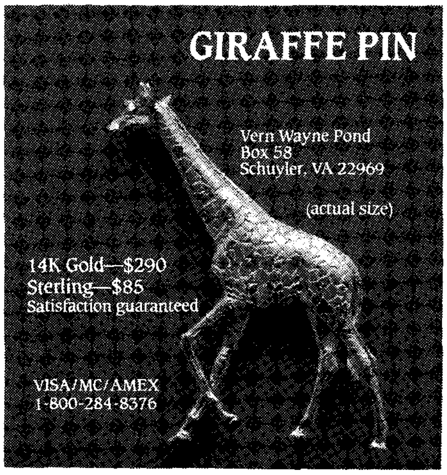

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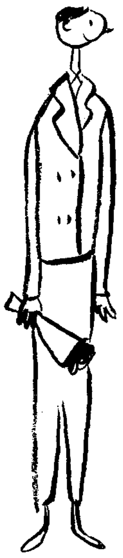
be staging for its commemorative Balanchine season. A few weeks before rehearsals started, she checked herself into a hospital in San Andreas, so ill that she couldn't remember her own daughter's phone number. By the time the hospital located her next of kin, she was dead.

The death of the woman who was Balanchine's most important ballerina between 1957 and 1962, and who served until 1971 as the dean of students at the School of American Ballet, went unobserved by New York City Ballet. (When Nureyev died, Peter Martins came before the curtain and made a speech.) Francia Russell wrote a tribute to Adams for the P.N.B. program book. She quoted a letter from Adams to her warning of the pitfalls in the "Agon" pas de deux: "There are moments (when the two place hands on each other's wrists, for instance) which can be infused with deep sentimentality, can look motivated by 'feeling.' This drove Mr. B. crazy. He really wanted it as cool and abstract as possible—*just* movement. It is redundant to say these things to you, you know as well as I do, the thought just welled up. I wish you much joy and success with these productions."



The pas de deux is the only part of "Agon" where the dancers are not counting. The rest of the choreography is encrusted with counts. Répétiteurs of Russell's generation and of Russell's quality are crucial to the survival of middle-period Balanchine. When it comes to musically adventurous works like "Agon," "Episodes," "Monumentum," and "Movements," there is no substitute for a good memory based on actual performance experience. The most (some say the only) reliable choreographic notation is that which is made under the choreographer's supervision at an early stage in a ballet's history, before the polish has been rubbed off by the routine of repertory. Parts of "Agon" were notated while Balanchine was working on it, but a full score was not made until after he died. Russell armed herself with four versions of the ballet on tape, using them as a check on memory and intuition. Rehearsing dancers, she worked from her own notes, painstakingly transcribed and preserved in a thick binder. ("From videotape," her succinct opinion of another company's production, is the ballet mistress's equivalent of "From hunger.") I was amazed by how much arbitration she had to do between one taped performance and another. The Bransle Gay had different accents and even different steps, and these sometimes differed from Russell's notes. In the studio, after conferring with the pianist Diane Chilgren, who knew the ballet from having played it for N.Y.C.B. in the seventies, Russell would select the version that seemed to her the most musical and "'Agon'-like."

I was amazed, too, by the dancers' speed in learning the choreography. Russell didn't think she could teach the men's roles, so the Balanchine Trust sent Peter Frame to Seattle. After he left, she took over and had the whole ballet on its feet in a week. "Agon" is still a great test of physical and mental agility and retention. At the end of the day, the dancers lay on the floor like tired puppies. One dancer left a rehearsal in tears. But it was not like 1957, when the dancers had to split up and rehearse separately, so as not to throw each other off. (An entire season passed before they stopped throwing each other off in performance.)

Seattle has the makings of a "Balanchine city": waterways, good music, great food. It has just spent ten million dollars on a glittering new building for the ballet school. My culture shock would have abated, I think, if I'd been able to stay longer and see more ballets, but the one thing wrong with Pacific Northwest Ballet is that it doesn't perform enough. It has to compete with the Seattle Opera and sundry other attractions for bookings in a theatre that is all the wrong size and shape for ballet. The two casts that Russell trained for "Agon" could have sustained a six-week season, but all they got between them was seven nights in the Opera House. Patricia Barker and Benjamin Houk danced the pas de deux, with Brent Davi and Louise Nadeau leading the two pas de trois. Anne Derieux and Sterling Kekoa headed the alternate cast, with Davi again and Julie Tobiason. Stewart Kershaw conducted the large and responsive orchestra. These were among the most stirring performances in my experience of "Agon," bringing the day closer when the existence of first-rate ballet companies outside New York will seem as unsurprising as the existence of first-rate symphony orchestras.

"Apollo" is also danced by P.N.B.—the full version, with the Prologue and Apotheosis as staged in the 1957 revival. The relationship of "Apollo" to "Agon" is similar to that of the two Apotheoses of Couperin. The "Lully," which was projected as a ballet, has a program; the "Corelli" is closer to absolute music. The choreography of "Agon" makes continual reference to the choreography of "Apollo." Apollo dances a Saraband, and the male soloist in "Agon" dances a "Saraband-Step." Calliope and Polyhymnia reappear in the two women who dance the Gaillarde, and Calliope's recurrent collapses are a recurrent theme in "Agon." Even the handclap of the Muses that recalls Apollo to active duty has its counterpart in the bright finger snap that fills a silent beat in the Double Pas de Quatre. The spread legs of Leto in the birth scene recur in the "Agon" pas de deux, as does the so-called "swimming lesson" of Apollo and Terpsichore, except that instead of taking the woman on his back the man in "Agon" bends his head to the side, and she floats head first down the front of his body, in the most sexually explicit act in ballet since Nijinsky's ejaculation in "Faune."

When Corelli is about to ascend Parnassus, he drinks deeply of the Hippocrene Spring, the fountain of the Muses' wisdom. The Hippocrene Spring, created by a blow of Pegasus' hoof in the earth, is horseshoe-shaped. Terpsichore appears for her variation holding her lyre above her head, and begins by pawing the ground with her foot, like a horse. Turn the lyre upside down, and it is a horseshoe. In "Agon," the men begin the ballet by literally spelling out the time with their legs and feet: alpha, gamma, omega, nu. The omega shape (Ω) is a horseshoe; it's also a demi-plié in second position. These meanings are stamped, one would hope forever, into Balanchine's choreography. They are not the things that give life to the ballets, but they are there, like the skeleton in the Bransle Gay, giving witness to poetry's continuity of belief. ♦

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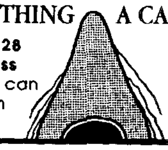

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

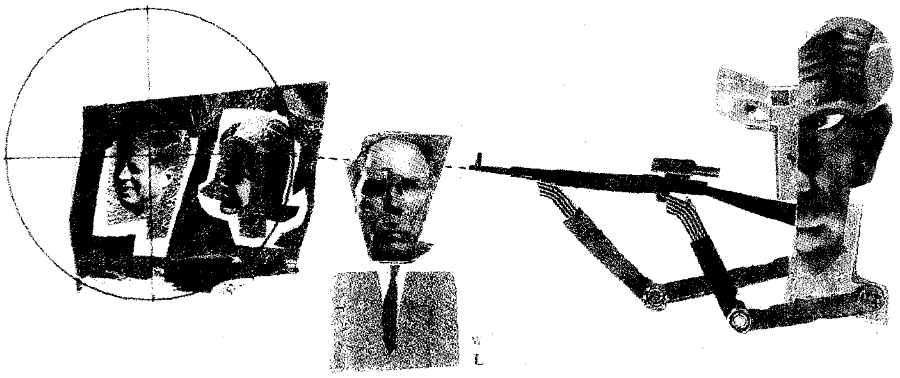
THE NICK OF TIME

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

IN the new Clint Eastwood vehicle, "In the Line of Fire," the crinkly eyes of the aging star have a stricken, panicky look to them, as they did in last year's "Unforgiven"—the look of a man who isn't at all sure of himself. It becomes him. The characters who defined Eastwood's screen persona—the mercenary Man with No Name in Sergio Leone's sixties Westerns and the trigger-happy San Francisco cop Harry Callahan in the "Dirty Harry" series of urban-avenger melodramas, which began during the Nixon Administration and gasped to a halt around the end of Reagan's—were implacable killing machines. In these roles, the man and his artillery seemed to form a single, fused unit, and his adversaries never looked as if they had a ghost of a chance of defeating him. Even in the cheerfully amoral terms of the genre-movie world that Eastwood's signature characters inhabit, these pictures were only fitfully effective as pulp entertainment; it's impossible to sustain excitement when the hero is invulnerable. If he's smarter than his opponents and can't be outnumbered (a typical Eastwood action scene ends with him striding, alone and unfazed, through piles of corpses), and if his resolve is never sapped by self-doubt or scruples of conscience, where's the suspense?

Frank Horrigan, the character Eastwood plays in "In the Line of Fire," is a tired-looking middle-aged Secret Service agent, who describes himself as "a borderline burnout." (This is how depressed he is: listening to Miles Davis cheers him up.) He's a curiosity within the Service, because he's the only remaining active agent who was present at the J.F.K. assassination. And he's haunted by his failure to react quickly enough to the sound of shots in Dealey Plaza; for thirty years, Horrigan has lived with the suspicion (his own and others') that he simply lacked the courage to do what he was trained to do—cover the President's body with his own and take a bullet himself. The script, by Jeff Maguire, gives Horrigan a chance for redemption: the hero gets wind of a plot to kill the current President, and forces himself to leap into action. He's constantly aware that his mind, his will, and, especially, his body are not what they used to be. Assigned (improbably) to the team of agents who run alongside the President's car in a motorcade, he somehow wheezes his way to the end of the route and then collapses, dead to the world, in his office. The cat-and-mouse game he's playing with the assassin (John Malkovich)—who calls him up frequently to taunt him about Dallas and to talk trash of the you-can't-stop-me variety—energizes the old agent, but it doesn't exactly rejuvenate him. For most of the picture, Horrigan is just hyperactive with anxiety, like a man awaiting test results from his urologist.

Although Eastwood still isn't much of an actor, this role suits him beautifully. His rocklike features are starting to crumble a little, and his whole demeanor has taken on a slightly melan-



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choly tone—a suggestion of fatigue and uncertainty. The ravages of age have conferred on him a dignity that his impassive-enforcer persona never had. The heroics in this picture are stirring, because Eastwood's sagging face and stiff, weary gestures tell us that everything Horrigan does costs him something, physically and emotionally. And his (and our) consciousness of his diminished powers gives "In the Line of Fire" some real dramatic tension—a clear, simple thriller logic that's far more satisfying than the static variations-on-a-massacre construction of his earlier action pictures.

The director, Wolfgang Petersen ("Das Boot"), serves the script, and the star, well. He's not a particularly imaginative or stylish filmmaker—when he's stuck he just hijacks an idea or two from Hitchcock to get him to the next point—but he delivers the goods, and in record time: the picture starts fast and picks up pace as it goes. The story doesn't lend itself to flights of imagination anyway. It's a basic race against the clock: the good guy knows what the bad guy means to do; the villain's preparations and the hero's investigation run on separate tracks until they converge, like runaway trains, at the scene of the intended crime. The movie pauses occasionally for comic or romantic relief, and the diversions are painless: the humorous scenes, mercifully, don't employ catchphrases of the "Make my day" sort, and Horrigan's romance, with a female agent played by Rene Russo, is treated lightly, briskly. But Petersen keeps the narrative on a very short leash; a quick jerk, and it's back on the straight, narrow path of stop-the-killer suspense. His task, as the director of an Eastwood action picture, is to give the summer audience a straightforward, brain-death-inducing thriller experience, and he has the crisp, confident technique to get the job done with surgical efficiency.

Both Eastwood's performance and the movie itself have the quality of meat-and-potatoes genre-picture entertainment: nothing fancy, nothing unusual. The only hints of more exotic and unpredictable sensations come from Malkovich, who is threatening to become the most gloriously peculiar screen presence since the heyday of Alastair Sim. His role here requires him to assume a variety of disguises—from acid-casualty hippie to uptight Silicon Valley businessman—and to look, in all of them, like a demented child, transfixed by the vivid, violent images that play inside his head and puzzled that no one else appreciates the fun of making those murderous fantasies come true. There's always a sinister edge to Malkovich's acting. He lets his face go blank at the oddest times, and his toneless, drawled line readings can be unnervingly ambiguous; apparently sincere statements turn bitter and ironic at the last moment, with a quick adjustment of inflection, and the effect is so shocking that it makes you laugh. The assassin's teasing telephone conversations with Horrigan are hilarious, because Malkovich keeps detonating these little vocal bombs in Eastwood's ear, and the hero goes to pieces: he really has no idea what hit him.

The two actors appear onscreen together in only two sequences—one in the middle and one, of course, at the end—but in some strange way Malkovich's mercurial performance seems to sharpen the effectiveness of the star's characteristically minimalist acting. When Horrigan talks to the assassin, the older man looks so befuddled and so far out of his depth that we really feel for him: Eastwood's affectlessness starts to seem poignant. After thirty-plus years of making action pictures, Clint Eastwood has finally learned that this sort of movie is a lot more exciting when the audience can legitimately feel afraid for the hero. Eastwood—like all movie stars—has been racing against the clock for years; in his two most recent pictures, he seems to be acknowledging that the clock is winning. He's like a veteran pitcher who has developed a wicked off-speed pitch to compensate for the loss of his fastball. For most of his career, he has playacted a notion (and a bad one) of courage and masculine power; now, in the decline of late middle age, his strength looks real. ◆

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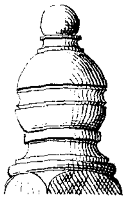
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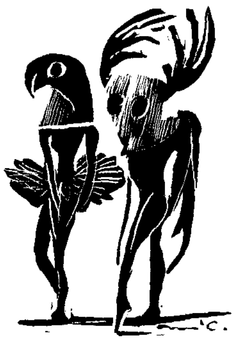
A PASSAGE THROUGH INDIA

BY EDITH OLIVER

TERRENCE MCNALLY'S "A Perfect Ganesh," at the Manhattan Theatre Club, is named for the Hindu god Ganesha, a frisky, benevolent deity, who in this instance becomes the protector of two middle-aged Connecticut women and eases their way on a pilgrimage of sorts through India. The play opens with Dominic Cuskern, as Ganesha, wearing a large elephant's head and a large Buddha belly, identifying himself and welcoming the audience, then jumps to Kennedy Airport, where Frances Sternhagen, as Margaret, prim, correctly tailored, and with matching luggage, is giving orders on seating and other matters to the clerk at Air India, a non-stop kidder. Zoe Caldwell, as Katharine, a breathless enthusiast, comes rushing in, in some disarray, luggage overflowing. "O for a muse of fire!" she calls to her companion—a line of hers that recurs throughout the evening. Margaret is in a state of huffing indignation, because their reservations have been lost in the airline's computer, but invisible Ganesha somehow manages for the two women to be transferred from maharani (or business) class to first.



Bombay is the first stop; the hotel room is satisfactory, except that Margaret sees a water bug "the size of a standard poodle" in the bathtub. I won't reveal any more of Mr. McNally's jokes; they abound and are wonderful—so wonderful that it takes a while to realize that a couple of sad, even tragic, stories are being told. As the ladies travel from place to place, we learn that Katharine's son, a young homosexual who felt insufficiently loved and supported by her when his lover died of AIDS, was beaten to death by a gang of black hoodlums. It is she who is making the pilgrimage, in the hope of some redemption—a redemption that comes to be signified by a small, perfect statue of the god Ganesha. Margaret's character seems at first purely comic—the usual complaints about dysentery, messy streets, etc.—but then we learn that her son, too, was killed, in an accident, as a child, and that a lump in her breast is getting bigger. Katharine, in her search for redemption, insists upon mingling with the beggars on the street and almost brings herself to kiss one of them. Meanwhile, the two women bicker quite a lot and decide that, though they love each other, they don't like each other very much. At the end, they reach the Taj Mahal and, standing transfixed, achieve a kind of spiritual peace, at the same time realizing that nothing can heal their wounds of the body or the soul.

"A Perfect Ganesh" tells what I call an and-then-and-then-and-then story, and it is not the tidiest of plays. Nevertheless, it is impressive. Mr. McNally encompasses sexuality, prejudice, AIDS, and spiritual and physical suffering, and always his irrepressible humor breaks through the sadness. No question about the performances; under John Tillinger's direction, every moment is strong and clear. Cuskern's Ganesha is the very model of psychic benevolence, to say nothing of benevolent mischief. Fisher Stevens, as the jokey airline clerk, a jokey flight attendant, and every other man in the cast, is amusing much of the time, and at his serious best as the murdered son and as the son's lover dying of AIDS. (This multiple casting may owe something to A. R. Gurney, who popularized it in "The Dining Room" and is currently using it in "Later Life.") Miss Sternhagen combines tenacity and pathos to telling effect, and Miss Caldwell endows Katharine, alternately raging and remorseful, elated and downhearted, hokey and tragic, with a subtlety and an intelligence that are as rare as they are precious. The constantly sliding, shifting, beautiful scenery was designed by Ming Cho Lee; the elegant costumes were designed by Santo Loquasto; and the effective lighting was designed by Stephen Strawbridge. ♦

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ON TELEVISION

COS CÉLÈBRE

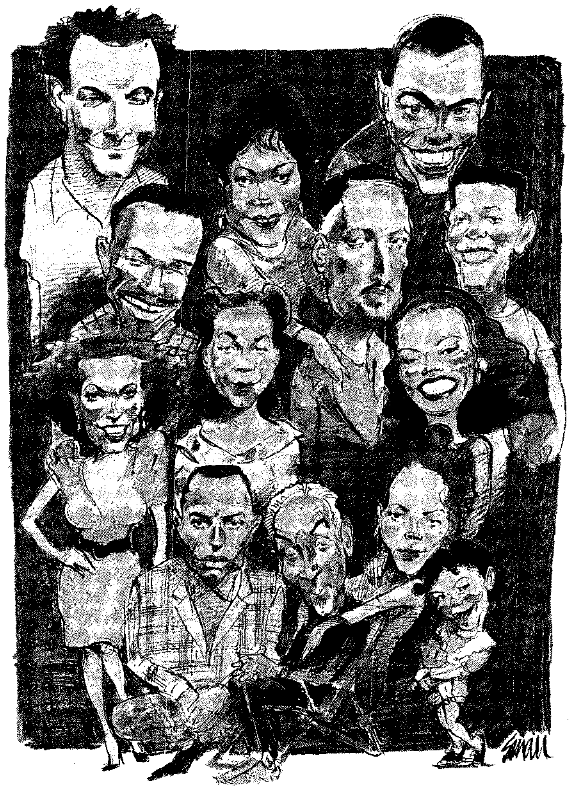
BY JAMES WOLCOTT

BILL COSBY isn't afraid to speak his mind, no matter how messy it may be. Holding court on the sofa of "The Arsenio Hall Show" last month, Cosby was asked what he thought of the popular young "Def Jam" comics who perform on HBO. "I don't like to see black people making fools and minstrels of themselves," Cosby said as Arsenio leaned forward, turning his entire head into a microphone. "It's a minstrel show, with the African-American people saying, 'O.K., it's my turn, I want to be a minstrel, too.' " "Def Comedy Jam," a showcase for standup routines, is produced by the black rap-music showman Russell Simmons, but Cosby sees a heavier hand jerking the strings. "It's HBO. HBO tells African-Americans, 'You can't come on the show unless you undignify your Africanness'—unless you become what they think is black. They want to dictate what is black. And as soon as you come on, you put three sentences together, there's a white male or female who says, 'You don't sound black.' "

It would be easy to dismiss Cosby's harrumph as the rumbling of a lion trying to lay down the law. Cosby has tried to tame younger black entertainers before; in one of his concert films, Eddie Murphy exposes how Cosby lectured him for using foul language in his act. (After Murphy related the story to Richard Pryor, Pryor supposedly advised Murphy, "Tell him to have a Coke and a smile, and shut the fuck up.") His chest inflated with the hot air of a century's worth of show-biz verities, Cosby resembles those Friars Club fixtures in the fifties who, rebuking Lenny Bruce, prided themselves on working clean. Or, as an older comic once put it, "Smut isn't funny. Funny is funny. I do a show the whole family can hate." Cosby displays the same crusty conservatism, minus the self-deprecation.

But the same night Cosby appeared on "Arsenio" I switched over to "Def Jam" just as a black comedienne hit the stage. "Waz up?" she squealed, showing off her outfit. "Do I look like a fuckin' lady or what? I like bein' a fuckin' lady. Especially in the nineties, we get to say what the fuck we want to, don't we girls? That's right. And still be a lady. That's right. 'Cause you know in the old days they couldn't say the shit they wanted to say. They had to fake orgasms and shit. We can tell niggers today, 'I wanna come, motherfucker.' " As she enthused on the joy of getting a Pap smear, I thought, Maybe old Cos is more than just babbling. Like the other comics on "Def Jam" that night, she did seem to be the object of her own ridicule.

Hosted by Martin Lawrence, the huggy-bear star of his own sitcom on Fox, "Def Jam" is the highest-rated comedy series on HBO, beating even the much lauded "Larry Sanders Show" and



The cast of Carl Franklin's "Laurel Avenue."

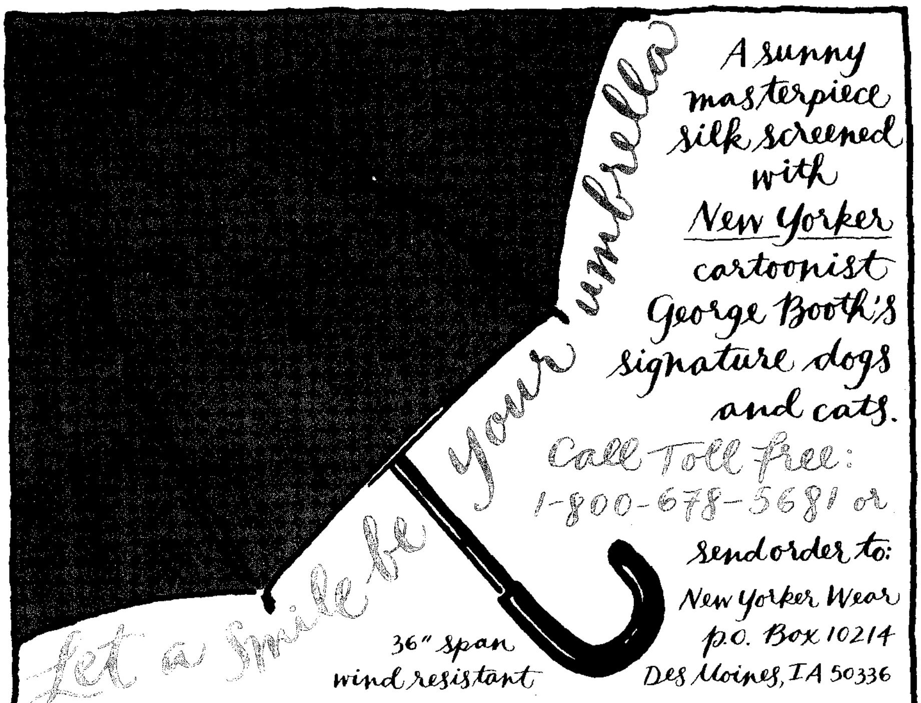
DAVID SMALL

"Dream On." (New episodes of "Def Jam" begin July 9th.) It's a hit because its cartoon hoodlum loudmouth macho plays big to young white suburban audiences in hormonal overdrive, offering them a vicarious virility cult. Like rap—which wears a fistlike scowl for every occasion (I said a *cherry* Slurpee, chump)—"Def Jam" comedy offers white audiences an earthy escape route from all the proprieties of political correctness. (It's the only place on TV where "fag" jokes still fly.) The jokes in "Def Jam" are like the lyrics in rap: streetwise boasts and threats fired off like rounds of live ammunition.

The show has mouth power to spare. The energy is high, the insults merciless. But "Def Jam" is fast rigidifying into jive formula. With notable exceptions (Warren Hutcherson describing how his militant Muslim father took the fun out of Christmas; Royale, a Cosbyish young comedian, recalling the playground politics of jump rope), the comedy has become almost a hundred per cent animal urge. The comics work so hard at selling their braggadocious selves that the real people recede behind their sex organs. "When in doubt, whip it out" is their motto. And the monologues reinforce the racist canard that black people are natural predators. They rob each other ragged. "I'm so broke, if a nigger robs me he'll just be practicin'," says a standup named Chris Tucker. It's interesting that long after Pryor renounced the use of the word "nigger" it's still in heavy rotation on "Def Jam."

The other big word is "bitch." The audience oohs when one male comic announces, "Bitches ain't shit." A few of the female comics tattoo themselves with the word. "I'm an easy bitch," a standup named Sheryl Underwood tells the crowd. She warns that black women have their own way of robbing each other. "Ladies, don't let a bitch in your house," Underwood says. "If you let me in your house, I'll fuck your man."

Sex on "Def Jam" isn't a courtship dance but a swap shop. There is something freeing about tearing away the veil of romance to reveal the raw transaction—it allows for some honest funk. Martin Lawrence miming the woman looking back at him during doggy sex has a dirty-Polaroid quality. And it's refreshing when the men admit that they're not all champs in the sack. "I'm fat. *So*?" Faizon says defensively, before demonstrating how he implodes after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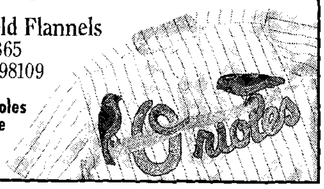

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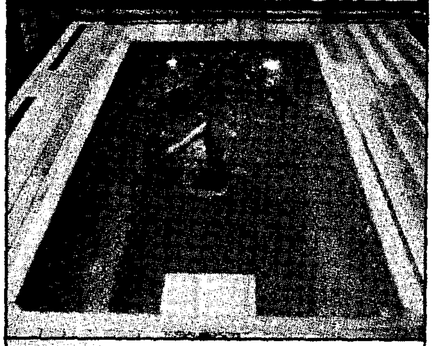

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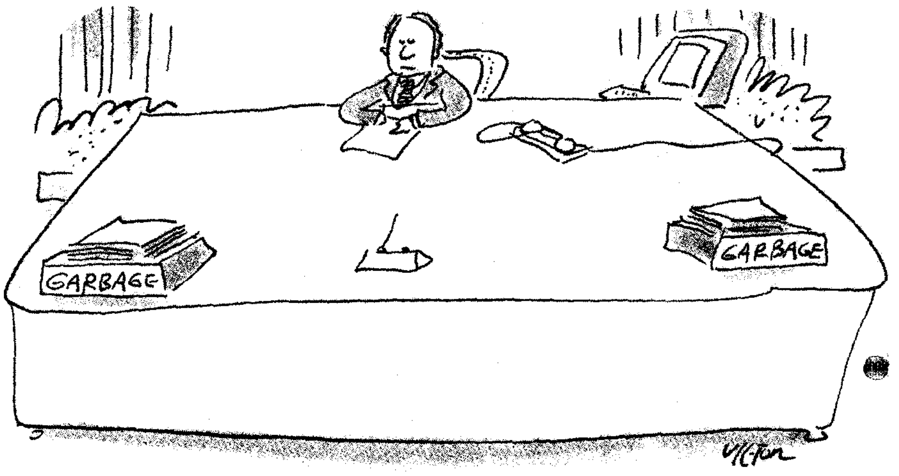

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three minutes of sex. (He collapses like a condemned building.) The problem is that the material becomes so insistently, monotonously dirty that you find yourself longing for a touch of demure—for some outward sign of civilization. It's a form of slumming, of watching performers play in the mud. Even the members of the live "Def Jam" audience seem jaded in the new shows, slumping in their seats as if they expected to be serviced.

Yet I don't buy Cosby's notion that HBO is the new overseer, deciding who makes the cut in black culture. If HBO intended to define African-Americans downward, it never would have O.K.'d "Laurel Avenue," the most emotionally layered look at black life ever presented on television. Directed by Carl Franklin, who earned favorable notice for his pulp art film "One False Move," this mini-series (which will air July 10th and 11th) isn't messagey and melodramatic, like "Menace II Society" or Forest Whitaker's upcoming HBO movie, "Strapped." Set in Minneapolis–St. Paul, "Laurel Avenue," an ensemble piece about an extended lower-middle-class black family, could easily have stiffened into a sociological treatise about the Black Family in Crisis. The checklist of troubles is certainly present: illegitimacy, truancy, drugs, guns. But you feel that the people came before the problems, that their flaws are part of the natural flux of life rather than a pathological blight upon the race. The characters actually converse in normal tones instead of shouting in tabloid headlines. And there's a remarkable lack of self-consciousness in the performances. Only the acting of the overly grand Mary Alice, with its slow-drip phrasing, contains artificial ingredients.

More subtly than "Def Jam," but no less damningly, "Laurel Avenue" shows how some black men crowd women. At the slightest nod, they ooze into late-night-FM pillow talk. One woman's ex sweet-talks his way through the door by complimenting her "pretty ass." The local preacher gives a *fine*-looking sister the once-over. Slickest of all is a Jamaican hustler who saunters as if he were walking his snake. Watching the men of "Laurel Avenue" put the smooth moves on women, your average white American male may say to himself, "Hey, I could learn from these guys." But the way women turn their heads away tells you that they're fed up with having to fend off lover lips. And, when silky technique fails, force often follows. One rejected lover pulls a gun. Another smacks the woman in the face, then says, "Look what you made me do."

"Laurel Avenue" isn't all sex strife. Morning light suffuses the screen, imbuing the characters with a pleasantly fuzzy just-up feeling. (One episode begins with a couple enjoying cunnilingus before church on Sunday.) Even when things go wrong, they have a wrecked beauty. Conjuring a fateful chain of events out of mood shifts and night air (the viewer is reminded of Martin Ritt's openhanded directing of "Hud"), Franklin leaves us with a deep-focus study of a car stranded on a rock, a body slumped in the grass, deathly shadows laked across the field below. The fatigue it evokes isn't hard to fathom. "People are tired, man," Cosby told Arsenio Hall. Three hundred years of racial tension is hard on the system. Hearing the "Def Jam" comics routinely refer to themselves as niggers and whores doesn't do much to lighten the load. ♦

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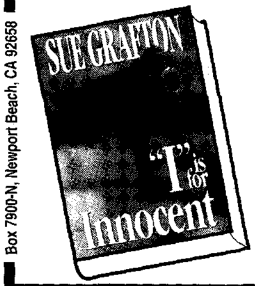

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SHYLOCK: THE SEQUELS

BY WILFRID SHEED

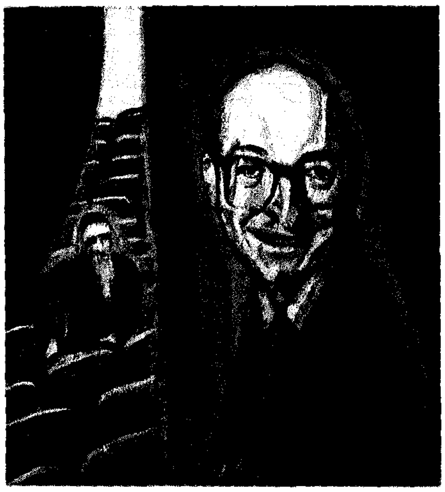
To save prospective ad writers the trouble of reading through a whole review—and to insure that this one gets printed before Labor Day—let it be said right away that John Gross's "Shylock" (Simon & Schuster; $25) is this reviewer's idea of the perfect book to take to the beach.

And there you have it. The flaccid yet overheated novels that are commonly described as beach books have the mortal defect that if you lose your place in one you are lost indeed; you might as well look for landmarks in the Sahara. But with "Shylock" you can open at any page and sink right down, as into a favorite chair, and know exactly where you are just from the sound of the voices, as the best critics and actors of successive eras address themselves to the twin mysteries of Shylock and Shakespeare, the opaque character and the impenetrable author, a whodunnit coupled with a whowroteit. With any luck, you can forget the beach altogether.

In retrospect, Shakespeare's career seems to have been designed expressly to be talked about forever in books like this. If we even knew for sure that he *was* Shakespeare, the industry named after him would lose hundreds of jobs overnight. Was he in fact an outsider guessing what it was like to be a lord, or was he a closet lord who could summon up at will every slight he'd ever received or dreamed about, and who knew from that what it felt like to be Iago or black or Jewish or even hunchbacked?

An Englishman who manages to conceal his social class for four centuries has certainly earned the right to think of himself as a magician, but it's pertinent to John Gross's book to note that it was probably easier to work this trick in late-Tudor and early-Stuart England than at any time before or since. With feudalism dead and the age of celebrity not yet born, it was preëminently an age of "new men" and funny money, in which gossip had its work cut out just keeping track of the latest peerages and dubious claimants to the old ones without vexing its head over *theatre* people. It was a great time to be a con man or a playwright, and it's surely no accident that Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, and Shakespeare constitute, in their different ways, three of the shadiest characters in the whole of literature.

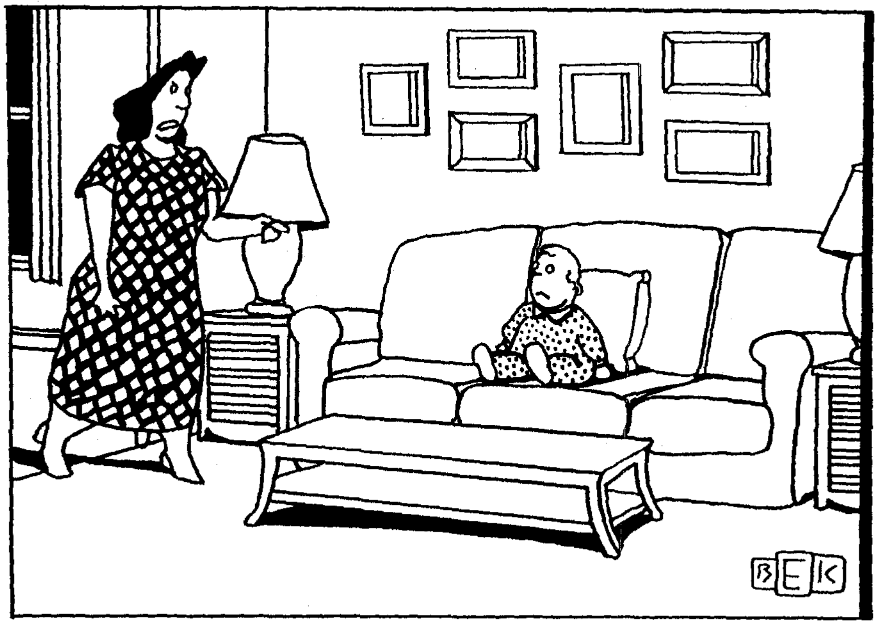
If we knew even as much about Shakespeare as one learns from the flap copy of a potboiler these days, we'd probably know a bit more about Shylock, too, and history might have been spared the zany array of interpretations that make Gross's book so entertaining and so cautionary. The interpretations form, in sum, the best part of the book and the best reason for buying it, but to describe them in any detail here would be to give the joke away. What one can fairly start chewing on in advance is Gross's preliminary inquiry about where the play came from and what Shakespeare thought he was doing with it.



John Gross's "Shylock":
Take it to the beach.

ANDREA VENTURA

Two early clues one comes to are the arresting possibility that Shakespeare never met any Jews at all and the near-certainty that he never met one remotely like Shylock. The only Jews of *any* kind allowed in England during most of his lifetime were a handful of Christianized Marranos on their best behavior and some court musicians (and Shylock had



"All right. Time to grow up."

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"no music in himself"); as for the Jews of Venice, Shakespeare would have had to hie himself to the Ghetto, not the Rialto, and preferably speak Yiddish, to meet one properly. So his archetype of the eternal Jew was spun entirely out of other ingredients, like a Joe McCarthy Communist or a Graham Greene American, only more so.

With no real models to go on, Shakespeare constructed his scarecrow out of two surefire elements: the Bible, which was the latest hot book in Protestant England, and money—everything he'd ever learned about the stuff from infancy. In the most casually explosive passage in his book Gross tells us that Will's father, John, dabbled in money-lending on the side, and that the poet himself may have been a bit of a shark, pursuing his own debtors into court on at least three occasions.

The only biography that the most brilliant commoner could expect in those days was scribbled in bits and pieces alongside Tom the Plowman's in parish registers and small-claims-court records. But for this one play, though, these sources may be almost enough. Lots of writers have known what it feels like to owe money, and could render you a monstrous Shylock: anyone you know only in his financial aspect is going to seem larger and simpler than life, a devil or an angel, a good Jew or a bad one. And debt collectors must *always* seem implacable, always want a pound of your flesh, your essence—it's their job to, and probably their only chance of collecting.

It is no doubt too pretty to be true to picture Shakespeare as learning his first lessons in power and resentment hand in hand with his father as John pounded and growled at some debtor's door. Behind every debt there has to be a threat, of the kind that wakes you up sweating, be it a humble breaking of legs or the loss of one's immortal soul. (Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus" is only an extreme image of the giddy world of debt that many Elizabethans must have found themselves in.) What Shakespeare knew from the inside was not just that the creditor is hated, but that he hates right back. The collection of money is the most degrading of occupations, even for college presidents, and someone has to pay for putting one through it. Thus Antonio, the lovable merchant of the title, is every fat cat, defaulting tenant, or spoiled younger son who has ever curled his lip and dragged his feet and later strolled off giggling with his friends: wiping the smile off such a one's face is almost as much as your life is worth.

Making Shylock a Jew as well is mischievous overkill, to be explained only in terms of contemporary box-office. In the original pound-of-flesh story, probably told along the banks of the Ganges, the background of the creditor is neither here nor there—his function makes him alien enough—while in at least one intermediate version not mentioned by Gross the roles are actually reversed, with the Christian demanding the Jew's flesh. It remains the same story, but Shakespeare, by making Shylock a Jew, gave him, as it were, an extra coat of villainy, a coat of fresh poison. He could hardly have done worse if he'd made Iago a Jew—and imagine what the passing centuries might have done with *that.*

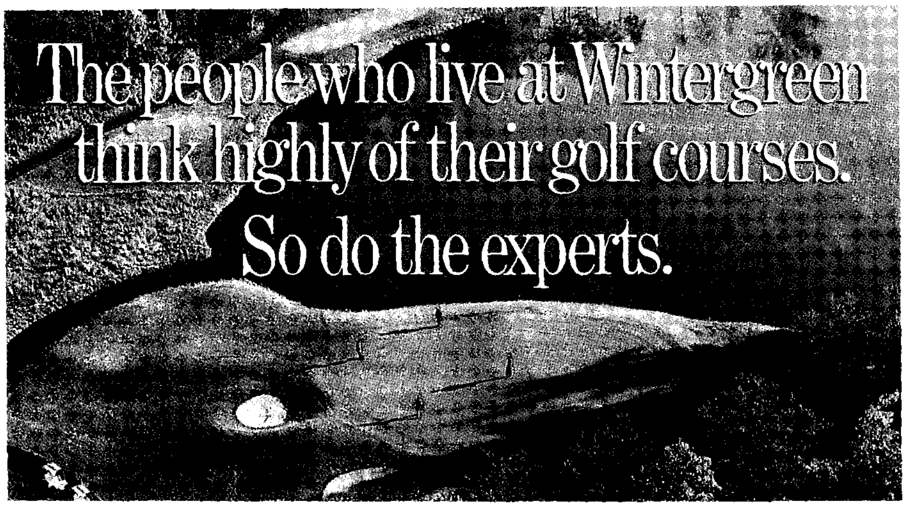
With actual Jews a distant memory, Elizabethan writers could pretty much give them any characteristics they chose, and Marlowe's Jew of Malta is, by contrast to Shylock, a pantomime ogre, an étude in villainy, no more to be hated than the Big Bad Wolf or the National Debt. But Shakespeare, uniquely for his time, or for most times, could hardly do a caricature if he tried, and his synthetic Jew took on a reality all his own, which, attached to this particular legend, turned out to be murder for at least two reasons tersely summed up by Gross—one being economic and the other religious verging on black-magical.

From the moment capitalism began to stir in the womb, Jews were doomed to play the role of "the rabbits who caused all the trouble" in the James Thurber fable. What was nice about capitalism was profit and what was nasty was debt, and the possibility that borrowing at interest might be responsible for both these effects was a secret that Christian merchants presumably kept to (and, if possible, from) themselves as they heard usury being denounced of a Sunday in churches made of gold that the stork must have brought. If only one could get rid of usury, and just keep the good part! But even in exile the rabbits continued to spoil everything, and the headaches still wouldn't go away. Sophisticated Elizabethans must have seen the humor of blaming the Jews by that time for the ancient English craft of usury, and surviving evidence suggests that Shylock was played strictly for laughs (which takes some doing) when it was played at all—until, that is, Jews became more of a presence again in western Europe, and resumed their roles in person.

Meanwhile, the symbols were in place for later use: Antonio, the Christian merchant, was what was good about one's life—the new house, the prospects—while Shylock, the Jew, stood for eviction notices and broken dreams. Naturally, such a sinister figure must have a gruesome inner life, and myths proliferated for centuries about what Jews did in their spare time, but tended always to circle back to the Christians' own obsession with ritual sacrifice. The doctrine of the Real Presence had long been a particular theological battleground in England, a regular Bosworth Field of its kind, as proto-reformers grappled with the Establishment, till the blood ran, over the exact sense in which the sacrifice of the Mass was a real sacrifice and in what sense one was eating real flesh in the course of it. Naturally, since the Last Supper had so much in common with a traditional Seder, there had to be a blasphemous Jewish version of the Eucharist, to go with the rest of their unredeemed agenda. No image in the newly available Bible was more powerful (or more fun to paint) than that of Abraham preparing to sacrifice his son Isaac—and Abraham was making those preparations before the Jews had turned their backs on God and His grace. Heaven only knew what they were sacrificing by now.

So the early Reformation was a tricky time to plant the idea of a Jew ravening implacably for Christian flesh (although one imagines contemporary theologians guffawing mightily over Shylock's failure to include blood in his demands, "Communion in two species" being another hot issue in their curious world). And Shakespeare only made things more incendiary by not making his Shylock a stage Jew, or malign buffoon, but a man of stern virtue gone diabolically wrong—a fallen angel, like Lucifer himself.

So *this* was what had become of the sons of Abraham. Plausibility must have seemed such a novelty to Elizabethan playgoers that Shakespeare could probably have sold them anything, especially in the field of Jewish studies, where anything already went. Simply by equipping Shylock with an Old Testament sonority and the famous "stiff neck" of his people, and throwing in some Biblical references for good measure, Shakespeare seemed to have established a real link with real Jews, although it was all a gorgeous fake: a compound of Bible-reading and the mad world of sixteenth-century money, and, of course, a little something else, always something else; to wit, his own poetic genius, which magnified all his characters willy-nilly and unpredictably, so that a sentry might with a single word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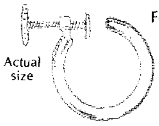

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steal a scene from a king, and his dramatic genius, which imagined its way, *burned* its way, into both sides of every situation, so that you can either feel them with equal intensity or choose the one that suits you and really pour it on in the production. Henry V can make war for Laurence Olivier or peace for Kenneth Branagh as easily as the Englishmen Shakespeare grew up around could be Catholic for Mary and Protestant for Elizabeth. In an age of masks, it would have been a rash play indeed that didn't allow of at least two possible readings, and perhaps the only reason "The Merchant" has had such a rich international history and "Richard II," say, has not is that Plantagenets come and go but Jews are perceived by astonishingly many people as eternal and unchanging, so that a two-thousand-year-old curse still applies in full and a sixteenth-century cartoon can sting like a fresh slap in the face.

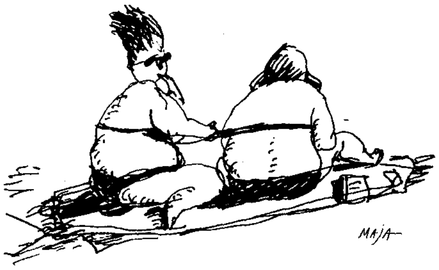
Yet, short of a total rewriting, "The Merchant" does not yield itself lightly to propaganda, and the running joke that burbles almost all the way through Gross's (why fight it?) engrossing book is the recurrent spectacle of partisans trying every trick they know to coax or bludgeon a round character into a flat one. The committee for a villainous Shylock can do nothing about the character's innate nobility: even played with a red wig and a Molly Goldberg accent, Shylock bleeds and feels and does everything else in his famous catalogue more majestically than all the other characters put together, besides (and this is really embarrassing) being a lot less interested in money. Yet the pound of flesh won't go away, either, and attempts to flatten Shylock into a good liberal have had their own funny side. Henry Irving "positively acted Shakespear off the stage," George Bernard Shaw wrote of the first and grandest such attempt. "He was simply not Shylock at all."

For Gross, the running joke ends abruptly, with Auschwitz. It seems that Shakespeare's gimcrack, make-believe Jew, who was unreal even in his own day, has since blossomed, courtesy of Nazi propaganda, into such a "typical" Jew that there is virtually no safe way to put him on the stage anymore. When critics of Dan Quayle (who sounds like a bit of a Shakespeare character himself: a beadle, perhaps) twitted that worthy for making such a fuss over a fictional personage like Murphy Brown, Quayle could have merely pointed to Shylock in reply—if even to mention the name isn't too incendiary these days.

What one devoutly hopes did end with Auschwitz was the old Shylock, in all his phases—from the medieval cabalist with the ten-foot nose to the cosmopolitan shark of later times. But that still leaves an awful lot of ways to play the part, not to mention the surrounding ones, which help give it definition. Later productions should have no trouble standing the play on its head right away, if they haven't already done so. Antonio the Merchant can be portrayed, without a word's being changed, as a dead white male of the worst kind. He has already, before the play opens, made such a killing off the backs of Third World peasants that he can now afford to buy popularity at home with a series of interest-free loans to his pals, little caring, or even noticing, that he is destabilizing the economy and putting minority bankers out of business.

So how do you get through to this guy? How do you convey to rich people what it *feels* like down here? You can't reach the Antonios of this world through their money, because there's too much of it, but they just might notice a pound of flesh missing—once they realize that it isn't a joke, that is, like everything else in their world. The only part you might have to tinker with is Portia's: she is, to be sure, a successful female lawyer dressed in pants, and that's a step in the right direction, but she needs to be a lot more up-front about it, while that "quality of mercy" speech suggests a failure of nerve worthy of Clarence Thomas claiming to be a lynch victim. It is essential that Portia beat these people at their own game, and in this arena mercy is for losers. So maybe it wouldn't violate the text too much if she simply added the word "Not" after each line?

And that's only the nineteen-nineties version. By the time he's rounded up every last production and stray line of criticism ever perpetrated anywhere, anytime, Gross sounds just a mite tired, as if he wouldn't mind moving on to something else, and maybe his fatigue rubs off a little. But Shylock himself, the outsider with the non-negotiable grievance, seems as fresh as a daisy, and is probably trying on new hats right now. Perhaps the best tribute to the part's sheer flex and obligingness is an inadvertent one from the Somali steward in Isak Dinesen's "Out of Africa," who felt that if Shylock had only used a red-hot knife and weighed as he went along he could have had his precise pound of flesh without drawing blood, and the story would have ended happily after all.



A final source of Shylock's immortality may be an emotional authenticity striking even in Shakespeare. If one had only this play to go on, one would say that this is the part the author knows best—the part where the club members laugh in your face and mockingly applaud your submission to their way of doing things, be you Kate the Shrew becoming the Little Woman or Shylock turning grimly Christian. To present-day audiences, there is really no contest: the smugness of the winners is insupportable any way you play it, and they could all, from the sound of it, stand to lose a good twenty pounds of flesh as well. We are all outsiders now, and, Gross's fears notwithstanding, Shylock has never looked so good.

But demonizing the Christians has its limits, because these are round characters, too—if in every sense, perhaps—and their laughter has a welcoming quality, when you listen closely, to go with the scorn. If, to take one more liberty with our largely imaginary author, Shakespeare ever had to make such an entry into the top circles of society, it's fair to suppose he found the ordeal worth it on the whole, but still an ordeal. Social climbing must have seemed almost irresistible just then: for a few years, it actually got you somewhere. But one imagines some brutal hazing from the other climbers, and cliques of climbers, along the way. Naturally, Shakespeare understands the winners in this game, too—he's one himself—but he can't help giving the underdogs the best lines. Then again, there *are* other plays to go by, and no doubt a book about Hotspur would tell a very different story. I can't wait. ◆

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Malefice
by Leslie Wilson
(Pantheon; $20)

ALTHOUGH the central character of this spare and elegant first novel is a witch, it is no more a "tale of the occult" than "The Handmaid's Tale" is a futuristic fantasy. Wilson uses a seventeenth-century witch-hanging as the premise for a chilling examination of a community struggling to make sense of its deepest suspicions and resentments by denying them a human face. The accused witch, the clever and mutinous Alice Slade, has maintained power over her neighbors by knowing them better than they are willing to know themselves: of her murderous acts she says, "You needed the harm, all of you, so I hurt you. You were ready for it." The night before Alice is to be hanged, the vicar, struggling with his shredded faith, tries to extract from her a conventional confession, in order to expunge her more convincing taunts. Meanwhile, her accusers, their voices closing in on the reader like a dark fugue, confront or betray the weaknesses she so successfully mined. Instead of setting witchcraft outside the pale, Wilson exposes the fragile boundaries between religion, magic, self-deception, and madness. One looks forward to more from this writer, whose penetrating gaze would, in the world she has created, warrant hanging.

Durable Goods
by Elizabeth Berg
(Random House; $17)

THE father of the girl who narrates this strong, economical tale is an Army colonel, and he treats his two daughters like erring grunts. They don't even have to err—they are beaten if the toilet overflows, threatened if they so much as sigh during dinner. Their mother is dead. The narrator, Katie, who is twelve, wants to run away, but she also worries about more mundane things, like her slowness in developing breasts. Many of the details are rich: Katie slow dances to "Theme from 'A Summer Place' " and eats graham crackers with condensed milk for dessert. This is the Elvis Presley era, when to be a teen-ager was to achieve much that life had to offer, but the claustrophobia of family existence is timeless. Here it is shown as a set of potentially dangerous coded actions. When the older sister wears a black dress, the father asks, "Are you a rebel?" Despite her dutiful reply, there is hope for these girls, because the answer is really yes.

GENERAL

The People v. Clarence Darrow: The Bribery Trial of America's Greatest Lawyer
by Geoffrey Cowan
(Times; $27.50)

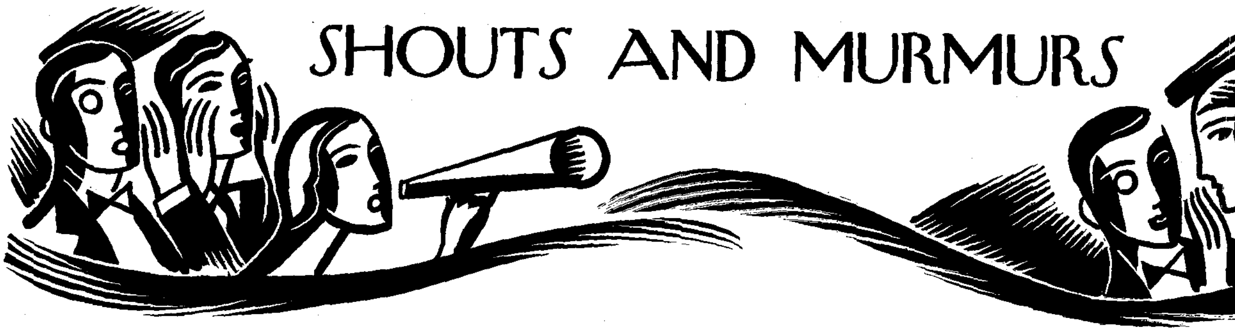
IN 1911, Clarence Darrow defended J. J. McNamara, the treasurer of the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers' Union, and his younger brother Jim, against charges that they had dynamited the Los Angeles *Times* building because the paper's owner, Harrison Gray Otis, used the *Times* to promote anti-union policies. Darrow struggled for nearly two months with a very weak case before he arranged a plea bargain that saved his clients from execution. His strategy infuriated the labor movement, which had paid for the McNamaras' defense, and held, as an article of faith, that the McNamaras were innocent victims of a capitalist conspiracy. The following year, Darrow himself was tried for bribing two jurors in the McNamaras' trial. He hired the second most famous American advocate, Earl Rogers, but Rogers became ill in the course of the trial, and the emotionally exhausted Darrow had to partly take over his own defense. On these courtroom dramas Cowan has constructed a splendid book, whose subtle portrait of Darrow caught between his idealism and his cynicism contributes to a realistic awareness of some of the ambiguities of radicalism in America.

Picasso and Dora: A Personal Memoir
by James Lord
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $35)

SHORTLY after the 1944 liberation of Paris, James Lord, a naïve and art-struck American soldier, decided to make the acquaintance of Pablo Picasso. Astonishingly, he had no trouble: he rang the doorbell and in a matter of days had not only become a familiar in the Picasso household but prevailed upon the artist to draw his portrait. Picasso introduced Lord to Dora Maar, who was then the artist's mistress, and there began between her and the American a long, ambivalent relationship, complicated by her self-centeredness and unpredictability, and his homosexuality. Lord is a skillful biographer, and he gives us, along with a detailed anatomy of his own relations with Maar, a vivid closeup of Picasso in his latter years, which highlights his perversity, his cruelty, and his showmanship. ("He used to be a great artist," Picasso's one-time collaborator Braque remarked to Lord, "but now he's only a genius.") Sadly, this memoir reveals a marked emotional atrophy in the aging wits and celebrities of the Paris art and intellectual world that glittered in the twenties and thirties.

The Music of the Spheres: Music, Science, and the Natural Order of the Universe
by Jamie James
(Grove; $20.95)

UNTIL comparatively recent times, music was understood to reflect the workings of an orderly and purposive cosmos. In fact, the heavens were thought to produce music as the stars and planets moved through them: "the music of the spheres." From Pythagoras to Newton, the best scientific minds of the West regarded this music as real but too rarefied to be heard by ordinary human ears. Jamie James, a music critic for the London *Times*, follows the history of this idea and its decline. He also traces changes in the status of composers, who were unimportant lowlifes in the ancient world, good citizens with day jobs in the Baroque era, and superstars in the Romantic, and are now an "establishmentized" avant-garde, entitled (or even obliged) to disdain their audiences. He relishes the sheer quirkiness of intellectual history, rescuing some of the battier beliefs of scientists and composers from the revisionism of textbook biographies and producing a graceful and entertaining account of matters seldom presented to the general reader. ♦



SHOUTS AND MURMURS

PLEASE REFRAIN FROM BREATHING

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

To save money, airlines in the United States are circulating less fresh air into the cabins of many airplanes.—*The Times.*

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM
TO: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
AEROAMERICA AIRLINES
FROM: SENIOR V.P., REVENUE
ENHANCEMENT DIVISION (R.E.D.)
RE: FURTHER SAVINGS

1. FOOD/BEVERAGE. Nutritional Research (N.R.) informs us that by adding a mixture of sawdust and polyethylene foam to the food—most of which is going uneaten anyway—we could cut costs *significantly.*

After extensive testing on focus groups, in which "passengers" were served "beef" and "fish" selections consisting of equal parts of real beef or fish and the sawdust-polyethylene mixture, it was determined that only three per cent noticed they were eating wood and plastic instead of our standard fare.

First and Business Class pose a challenge, as these are more sensitive palates, but N.R. feels that the problem can be solved by heavily spicing the dishes with inexpensive cumin and calling them, respectively, "Beef Bangalore" and "Fiery Fish."

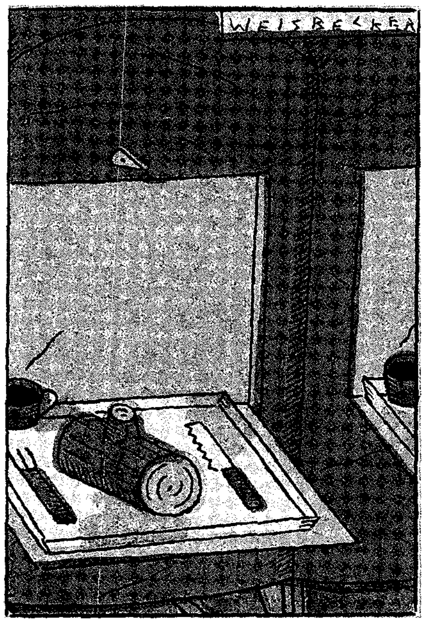
Bonus: Once the sawdust-polyethylene mixture reaches the stomach, it expands to five times its normal volume, greatly reducing passenger desire for expensive complimentary beverages. (See Tab A—Flight Surgeon's Report on Effects of High-Altitude Consumption of Wood and Plastic.)

2. SAFETY EQUIPMENT. Studies have shown that a statistically insignificant number of seat-cushion P.F.D.s (Personal Flotation Devices) are ever actually deployed. Their primary value is psychological, providing passengers with the illusion that they might survive in the event that the aircraft plunges into the ocean at five hundred miles per hour. Additionally, since eighty-five per cent of our flight routes are over land, it might logically be asked: Why bother with flotation devices at all?

R.E.D. suggests that it makes prudent, even urgent, economic sense to remove the polyethylene foam from inside the seat cushions and put it where it can be more profitably used—namely, in the passengers' food. (See Tab B—Polyethylene Foam: Tofu of the 1990s?)

As for the inflatable life rafts, these items are both bulky and heavy. They take up space that could be more profitably used for passenger seating (see below), and they increase drag and reduce lift, putting strain on the engines and requiring more fuel. R.E.D. recommends that these be sold, and replaced with smaller and lighter substitutes—yellow bags filled with shredded in-flight magazines.

3. THE COCKPIT. While employing pilots, co-pilots, and flight engineers was once desirable, even necessary, sophisticated computers and flight systems can now do their work far more efficiently.



(How many times has the N.T.S.B. attributed a crash to "computer error"? Not many.) Additionally, computers do not demand raises, require medical or pension plans, go on strike, or participate in profit sharing. (See Tab C—Rethinking Profit Sharing: Whose Airline Is It, Anyway?)

A possible solution: As you are only too well aware, AeroAmerica's policy of terminating female flight attendants over the age of fifty has met with stiff—and very costly—legal resistance from their union, and has resulted in unfortunate (and grossly unfair) publicity. Would it therefore not make sense to take these troublesome flight attendants, pay them half or a third of their former salaries, put them in pilot, co-pilot, and flight-engineer uniforms, and stick them in the cockpit? This would kill many birds with one stone: (a) passengers peeping into the cockpit on entering and leaving would not become agitated on finding no one there; (b) the aging flight attendants would be grateful to have jobs, even at reduced salaries; and (c) AeroAmerica would be seen to be in the forefront of women's rights.

4. SEATING. Though passenger-satisfaction questionnaires often reflect dissatisfaction with existing seating configurations, our research has determined that seventeen inches is more than generous for the average passenger's posterior, and that ten inches of legroom is probably adequate in most cases. Over the centuries, the human body has shown itself to be almost infinitely adaptable. R.E.D. recommends reducing current posterior allotments to fourteen inches and legroom to six inches. (See Tab D—Coffins, Tiger Cages, and Cattle Cars: Masterpieces of Ergonomic Design.)

5. EMERGENCY MASKS. Does it not strike management as odd that as we are reducing passengers' air supply we continue to supply them, gratis, with *oxygen?* ♦

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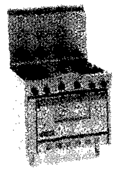
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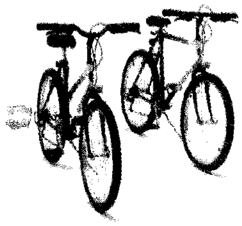
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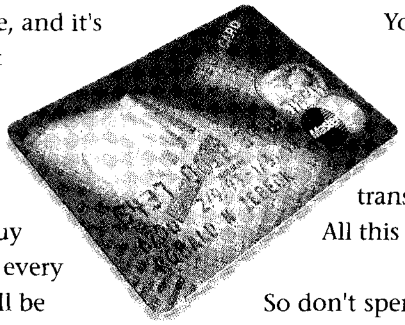

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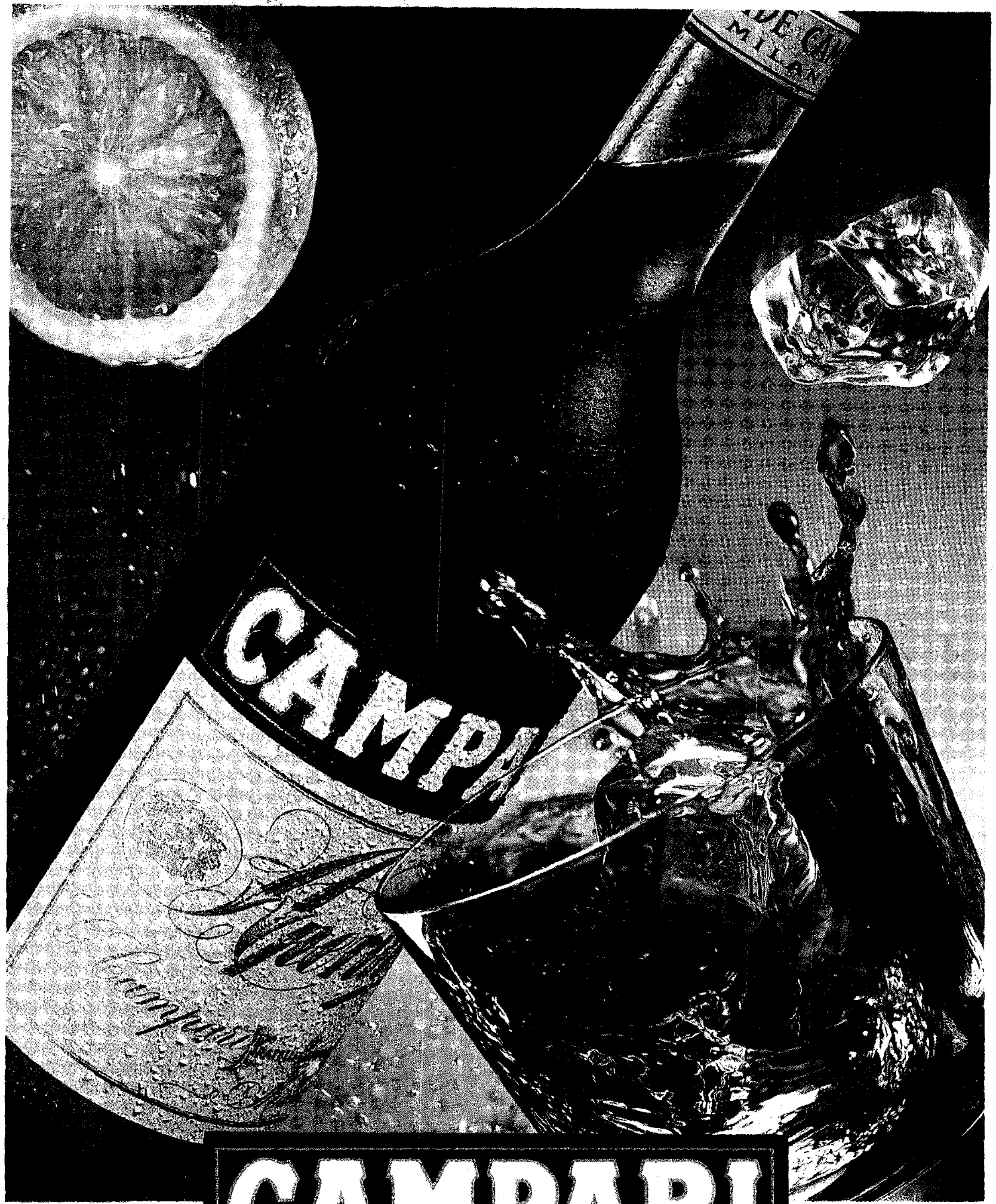

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